

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1. Theoretical Framework

There are two theories that the writer used for her study that will be explained in this chapter. This study refers to the theory of swear words, taboo words, gender and age in society. The second theory is used because the writer wants to know how female and male use the swear words in the conversation.

##### 2.1.1. Swear Words

Crystal (2003) stated that swearing refers to the strongly emotive use of a taboo word or phrase. It is an outburst, an explosion, which help the user in drawing or picturing their emotional energy. It can be drawn at people or objects. Swearing is a part of taboo words which have negative usage. The most important thing that we may find no meaning at all in using swear words. The words only used to drawing the emotion of user. Furthermore, expressing a wide range of emotions, from mild to strong annoyance thing in bursting the anger, might become the function of swearing.

Swearing has two important social functions, as a mark of social distance and a mark as social solidarity. Swearing can mark social distance, such as when a group of teenagers swears loudly or writing bad word graffiti on walls such as

pornographic and indecent word. They swear loudly in front of the people or public or writing graffiti to shows their contempt as their group habit. Swearing can also mark social solidarity such as when a group of teenagers develops their own identical swearing habit as a group. As a member of the group, teenagers have to appreciate this habit. They do this important habit to show their group solidarity.

When we move to a new area, we have to join the rule in the area. It is also happened when we join a new social group. For teenagers, it is a common thing to have swearing norms in the youth social group. Then, we seem much influenced by the new swearing norms in it. We have to consider and respect about this as a new member.

### **2.1.2. Taboo Words**

Wardhaugh (2002), in *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*, stated that taboo word is about “meaning”, how the culture influences the meaning of a word that expresses in a language. Certain things are not said, not because they cannot be, but because people in the society do not talk about those things. If those things are talked about, it must be changed to other word in making the more polite meaning and in a better way, not as taboo as before. Wardhaugh also stated that Haas (1951) has pointed out that certain language taboos seem to arise from bilingual situation. According to Jendra (2010), people who are not monolinguals and speak two languages every day are named *bilinguals* (bilingual people). A

language influences one another in the society where they are used. This condition may cause people, in daily interaction, use taboo words in some sort of language.

Taboo, according to Wardhaugh (2002), is prohibition of behavior believed to be harmful to its members in any society which would cause them anxious, embarrassment, or shame. Each social group determines the language which is used by the people in it purposely included taboo words. It means that every society has taboo words and the words are avoidable to be used in conversation. There are varying widely subjects of taboo words; such as sex, death, excretion, bodily function, religious matters, and politics. The societies have their own justification of taboo words. For these reasons, every person must concern the words that he/she will use to communicate in the society. They have to separate then filter the good and bad words, such as taboo words, in order to having good image as a member of society.

Karjalainen (2002) also stated that taboos are not universal. They are created by each culture and each language, although they often overlap. As the example, the writer take the example from Sumarsono and Partana's book entitled *Sosiolinguistik*, in Malaysia the word *butuh* is taboo to say for that reason of pornography. According to [dictionary.tamilcute.com](http://dictionary.tamilcute.com) accessed on January 4th, there are two meanings in the word *butuh* in Malay. The first meaning is need, necessity, while the other meaning is for *penis*. The Pakistan late Prime Minister, Ali Bhutto, his name has the similar pronunciation as the word *butuh*. Malaysian changed his name into Ali Bhatto in order to avoid the taboo words which occurred in their society. While in Indonesia which basically use the same

language, Malay, does not put the word *butuh* as the taboo word. It means very extremely need to use, need according to [kamusbahasaindonesia.org](http://kamusbahasaindonesia.org) accessed on January, 4th. The other example comes from Thai students who learn English in English-speaking countries. They are difficult to say the English word *yet* and *key* because the sound of both two words are similar to the Thai word *jed* and *khii*. The Thai word *jed* is a vulgar word for ‘have intercourse’ while the word *khii* is for ‘excrement’. It is an embarrassment for Thai people in using these two words. It is an embarrassment for Thai people in using these two words, *yet* and *key*. The second example is taken from *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics* by Wardhaugh in 2002.

While taboo words according to Sumarsono and Partana (2004) are not only fears of invisible spirit such as something used to prevent disease or misfortune, black magic, magic to made a person fall in love, etc.; but also in relation to the politeness and the etiquette in a social intercourse. Person who does not want to image as ‘impolite person’ will avoid using the words that are taboo in his society such as the two examples above. In Indonesia, especially in an ethnic language, females avoid the use of taboo words more, such as sex organ or other dirty words, than male.

The term of swear words and taboo words have closed meaning. To compare those two things, the writer took the definition of swear word by Dewaele (2004) and taboo word by Wardaugh (2002). In giving clear definition, Dewaele stated in her journal that one of her participants; Jan whose first language is Dutch, his second language is English, his third language is German, his fourth

language is French, and his fifth language is Fijian; would only use Dutch to swear in or express anger. It is good for that as it is such an ugly sounding language. It means that swear word is to express anger, shows emotion of swearer. While taboo words (Wardhaugh, 2002) is about “meaning”, how the culture influences the meaning of a word that is expressed in a language. So it is not only about emotion and anger, when the words are taboo to speak in a society, it is called as taboo word.

According to Ljung stated in Karjalainen (2002), a swearword is a *taboo* word, used in a *non-technical, emotive* way. It refers to swear word is technical and emotive, and although all swearwords are taboo, not all taboo words are swearwords. He has differentiated between emotive and emotional, such as in the following situation:

If a person accidentally drops a hammer on his or her foot, he or she probably feels a certain amount of pain, but not enough to lose control – this may result in an emotive expression to vent frustration and anger, e.g. “Damn!”. However, if the same person drops a largish anvil on his or her foot, this very likely leads to a highly emotional, inarticulate groan or cry of pain

Furthermore, the writer took the classification of taboo words according to Andersson’s statement (in Karjalainen 2002). The categories of taboo words are divided into 7 types:

- (a) Sexual organs – sexual relations
- (b) Religion – church
- (c) Excrement

(d) Death

(e) The physically or mentally disabled

(f) Prostitution

(g) Narcotics – crime

The first category is sexual organs or sexual relations. From these words we can see that taboo words which are produced are related to the sex term. The sex term here refers to sexual organ or relation.

The second category is religion (church). The religious matter here is related to God, it may be also related to the religion as a person's faith.

The third category of taboo words is excrement. The term of excrement here has connected with human excretory. These three categories are the most universal categories which are shown in the society.

The next category of taboo words is about death. Death certainly may be taboo subject if we think of all the people in the society use ways of talking about death.

Then, the physically and mentally disabled become the next category of taboo words. The physically and mentally disabled for some reasons may become a taboo word, Andersson take the reasons as below:

We look away when we see a handicapped person, and when having a discussion with a mentally disabled person, we try to remain open minded and natural to the degree that we actually achieve the exact opposite. It

should also be noted that words used when talking about the physically or mentally disadvantaged soon become loaded and offensive – take the words like ‘retard’ or ‘cretin’, which were originally neutral words – and are replaced by euphemisms.

(Karjalainen, 2002 p. 18)

Physically and mentally disabled here is all about incapability on physically and mentally of a person, such as in the word *retard*, *cretin*, *stupid*, etc. Sometimes, people use it to mock the incapability on physically or mentally of a person.

The two last categories, prostitution and narcotics and crime, Andersson (in Karjalainen 2002) gave a good example of these terms: A mother might be proud of her son who is a banker in New York and of her daughter who is an accountant in London, but it is very unlikely to hear a mother proudly tell about her son who is a pimp in Harlem or of her daughter who is a hooker in Soho.

Crystal (2003) stated that there are two kinds of taboo usages; positive and negative. Positive taboo usage is used to show a positive definition of something; such as to show wonder, sympathy, embarrassment, etc. While negative taboo usage is used to show personal abuse, dirty activities, negation, trouble, fear, deception/tease, nastiness, and rubbish. All of the taboo words categories above are pointed to the negative usage of taboo word.

### **Reasons in Using Taboo Words**

Taboo words is prohibition, people avoid use these words in the society. People must have their own reason why they use these bad words. Wardhaugh

(2002) stated that people use the words because they want to show their own freedom from such social constraints. Freedom is the word which we want to reach; do not care about the rules of religion, and the rules in the society. We are free in saying words and do everything we want. Sometimes we seem revolt in all of rules in life. Second reason is to expose the taboo as irrational and unjustified, as in certain movements for 'free speech.' When people see the irrational and unjustified thing in surround them, they are potentially to use taboo words. The next reason is to draw attention to one self. It is used when a person want the others to pay more attention to what the person will say or do. Then to show contempt is also the reason to use taboo words. When people feel contemptible of something, it can raise their emotion. This condition will lead them to use taboo words. The next reason is to be aggressive or provocative. Being a person who is aggressive or provocative can make the person different with the others. He will be well-known as the person who is more prominent than the others. As the result, he will be famous because of the character of aggressive and provocative. Then, he will catch more attention from the people around him. The last reason of using taboo words according to Wardhaugh is because the people want to mock authority in the society. It is also a kind of emotional feeling. Sometimes the authority of a society can not be acceptable by the people in it. They may feel that the rules are not suitable with them. So, they use taboo words because they want to mock the authority.

Shortly, the reasons of using taboo words are:

- To show their own freedom from such social constraints,



- To expose taboo as irrational and unjustified,
- To draw attention to one self,
- To show contempt,
- To be aggressive or provocative, and
- To mock authority.

### **2.1.3. Gender**

Gender has the close meaning with sex, such as in taboo and swear word. Wardhaugh (2002) stated that sex is determined by biologically only, in what sex the people were born. Are they girl or boy? Whereas gender is a social construct involving the whole gamut of genetic, psychological, social, and cultural differences between male and female. Although a person was born as a boy, the gender of this person might not be a male, if his psychological, social, cultural appearance looks like a female. Both of them, men and women, are members of a culture.

Wardhaugh (2002) found that women's speech is not as important as men's speech. Their speech is trivial, gossip-laden, corrupt, illogical, idle, euphemistic, or deficient is highly suspect; nor it is necessarily more precise, cultivated, or stylish—or even less profane. This statement makes sense with the researches which are mentioned below about taboo words. The researches stated that male use stronger term of taboo words, while female use more restricted taboo word. As stated above that women speech are euphemistic, so here they

avoid the use of taboo words in their speech and change the taboo words into euphemism.

According to Holmes (2008), the subordinate group must be polite; they have to speak carefully by using standard forms of language. She stated that women and children are subordinate groups. Children are expected to be polite to adults or person who is older than them. By using standard forms of language, women can protect her 'face' and it can avoid offence to others. By protecting her 'face', woman wants to have more status than she is entitled to comparing to men in a social group. Woman uses standard language not only to protect her 'face', but also to the people they are talking to, is more promising.

The feature of people' speech vary at different ages too (Holmes, 2008); such as pitch, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. It can differentiate age groups. There are some patterns of children or teenager which disappear as they grew older, age-graded pattern. Holmes gave a short conversation as example which there is a teenage Australian girl and female interviewer who are talking about ages and swear words. The teenage Australian girl said that 13 or 14 years old children swear a lot in a show. She said that children in that ages did not thought that swearing sounds terrible and bothers another, but when they grew older, they will realize about it. It gives one of clear example of patterns which disappear as children or teenagers get older. The swear words which used by teenagers are also changing over time. In relation of using swear words and gender, Holmes stated that male restrict the use of these words to all-male settings only, while female reduce swearing in all settings as they grew old.

Men use more taboo words than women not only shown in English. In Indonesia, this condition also occurs. According to Sumarsono and Partana (2004), in Indonesia society, especially in a local language, women avoid the use of words which are related to the words such as sex genital or the other ‘bad’ words more. These words gave the effect of being tabooed for women, or gave the effect of be men monopoly. Kuntjara (2004) stated that the words such as *asu*, *jancuk*, *lonte*, etc. are impolite and rude words which are often used by men in Indonesian. The relation of women and men in almost culture in Asia shows that usually the position of women is lower than men. This statement can extremely influence the way they use the language, including the way they have to behave related to their status.

Related to the taboo words, McEnery (2006) discovered that there are a set of words significantly overused by males and a set of words significantly overused by females. The use of bad words by females and males may differ. Males prefer to use the stronger word forms while female prefer to use the weaker word forms, such as may cause offence. Male words are more offensive, more potent, than female words. Here are examples of bad word language related to gender in McEnery (2006, p. 35):

Words preferred by males and females in the BNC

Words	Frequency of use by females per 1,000,000 words	Frequency of use by males per 1,000,000 words	Overuse by
God	459.38	172.33	Females

Fucking	99.77	284.10	Males
Bloody	526.71	277.80	Females
Fuck	32.75	68.28	Males
Pig	11.32	1.42	Females
Hell	146.29	114.21	Females
Bugger	39.48	25.00	Females
Bitch	17.14	8.54	Females
Pissed	24.18	13.82	Females
Jesus	9.79	18.70	Males
Arsed	2.45	0.20	Females
Cunt	5.51	11.18	Males
Fucker	0.61	3.25	Males
Shit	80.19	63.81	Females
Pissy	1.22	0.00	Females

McEnery also categorized that there are five grades in a scale of offence; very mild, mild, moderate, strong, and very strong. In order to know the scale of offence used by females and males, the writer put the second table as below:

Shock	Male	Female
Very mild		god, bloody, pig, hell
Mild	Jesus	bugger, bitch, pissed, arsed, shit
Moderate		
Strong	fucking, fuck, fucker	

Very strong	Cunt	
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The writer found the other references which said that female use more restricted taboo words than male. Male use it in a public and in a stronger term. Pilotti et al in their American International Journal of Contemporary Research in 2012 and Dewaele in Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development in 2004 found these facts.

Pilotti et al (2012) found that between men and women, men have been found to know more about taboo words, they were courageous in using swearwords more in public, and in a “stronger” term, even though emotions were reported more intensely and frequently experienced and expressed by women. Men have also been reported to recall, between taboo and neutral words, more taboo words.

In other references, Dewaele (2004) found that sociolinguists have analyzed the effect of independent variables such as gender, age and social class on the use of S-T (Swear-Taboo) words. Rayson et al (1997) performed a frequency analysis of vocabulary items in the conversational component of the British National Corpus. They found that males and speakers under age of 35 used more taboo words and that social class did not affect the use of swearwords. Stenstrom (1995), in her analysis of taboo words in The Bergen Corpus of London Teenager Language, confirmed the generational difference (teenagers swearing more than adults, possibly as a way to establish group identity). She also noticed

qualitative differences, with teenagers primarily using taboo words related to sex and drinking, and adults taboo words derived from religious subjects. No gender differences were observed in choice and frequency of swearwords among the teenagers but adult women were found to use more but 'weaker' taboo words than adult men. Stenstrom (1999) analyzed a 21,000-word sub corpus of the same corpus, equally divided between females and males, aged 16, presumed to be upper-middle-class, engaged in same-sex conversations. She found that girls use intensifiers (bloody, fucking) more often than boys, but use a more restricted set of terms than boys, who include more swear words in their expanded set.

## **2.2. Related Studies**

There are three studies that have similarity with the writer's study. The study concerns with taboo and swear words. The thesis is entitled A Study on The Use of Taboo Words by The Male Students of The English Department, Airlangga University (A Sociolinguistics Approach). The thesis was conducted in 2000 by Tri Sulistyowati Wahyuni. She wanted to analyze the taboo words used by the male students of English Department of Airlangga University. Wahyuni found that the male students of English Department, Airlangga University used taboo words spontaneously, sometimes in the form of euphemism. The frequency of using the words is according to their leisure time, when they are relaxed; they tend to use the words ad vice versa. Wahyuni also found that around 60% of the male students did not agree in using taboo words. According to them, those words are impolite to say. Although, most of them did not agree, they can not stop to

using those words because sometimes those words can be function to express their emotional feeling.

Another study also concerns with taboo words. This study was conducted by Janschewitz in 2008. This study is entitled Taboo, emotionally valence, and emotionally neutral word norms. This study is comparing taboo, emotionally valence, and emotionally neutral word norms on the same scales. The data is taken from 78 native-English-speaking college students from a large metropolitan university. This study shows that taboo words do not behave like other word categories, particularly the distinctions within frequency and inappropriateness measures, and on the arousal measure. This study also found that taboo words are most similar to negative words. The negative taboo words, such as in Wahyuni' and Janschewitz' study is included in the term of swear word. That is why the writer thinks that their study can also become the related studies for the writer's study.

While the last study which the writer found talked about swear word. The study was conducted by English Department Student of Airlangga University too in 2012, Ditha Heriananda Putri. This is also a sociolinguistics approach. This study is entitled An Analysis of the Functions of Swear Words Used by Teenage Bonek Community in Surabaya. In this study, Putri talked about the functions of swear words by Teenage Bonek Community in Surabaya. She found that there were seven of ten types of swear words classified by Timothy. Those words occur are never related to religion term. She also found that all of four functions of swear words classified by Andersson and Trudgill are used by the teenage Bonek

community. They use it for many other purposes such as abuse the hearers, help the speaker feel relieved, humor, and it also can be just someone's way of speaking.

In this study the writer wanted to know about swear words which is used by children. The children who are chosen by the writer are in the age of 12-13. They are 6th grade of elementary school students. The data is taken in a class when they were studying in a non-formal course. The writer wanted to know how they use swear words in their conversation, the category that is used, the reasons of using swear word, and the differences between boys and girls in using swear words. All of them make differences between this study and those three studies above.