

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Language has an important role in human life because it is the main means of communication. Lyons in Jandal (1968) says that language is principal system of conventional spoken or written symbols by means of which human beings, as members of a social group and participant in its culture, communicate. As a means of communication, language has several functions. Generally, people use language to communicate their intention to others. Specifically, language is used by people to convey messages or to send information in order to make the conversation activities run smoothly. Some people may prefer to use language that has a strong impact when they are sad or angry. For instance, people sometimes use certain kind of words that are considered as bad language which is actually inappropriate to use. One of the ways to express their feeling is by producing taboo words. People usually produce taboo words to swear because they are the strongest way to express their dissatisfaction. They sometimes emphasize people's real intention.

Taboo word can bring strong impact on the others. It because taboo words related to bad language that has rude meaning. According to Trudgill (2000), Taboo is associated with things which are not said, and in particular with words and expressions which are not used. Yule (2010) stated taboo terms are words and phrase that people avoid for reason related to religion, politeness, and prohibited behaviour. It describes people use taboo words in certain situations, but not in formal situations. Because taboo words will bring embarrassment and

offensiveness, some people use taboo words only when they want to express their bad feeling such as anger, disappointment and dissatisfaction. In other words, people utter taboo words only in appropriate time and place.

Taboo sometimes can be found in dialogue of a movie. The actor or actress expresses taboo words to attract the viewers, but not all viewers understand the utterances of taboo words, especially if the taboo words used are not in the viewers' language. It is caused by many factors, especially by culture factor. As the result they do not understand what the movie delivers about as found in *American Gangster* movie. The genre of this movie is crime drama.

Therefore, to do the analysis about taboo words from a movie is interesting because in *American Gangster* movie there are taboo utterances spoken by the actor that are not understood enough by the viewers especially the movie watched by Indonesian viewers. Hopefully, through this study people can change their perspective on taboo words, therefore people can treat taboo words better as a part of human language. Moreover, taboo words is interesting to discuss because it relates to the language use and society.

1.2 Problem of the Study

Based on the background above, there are two problems were formulated in this study. Those problems are:

- 1) What types of taboo utterances are found in *American Gangster* movie?
- 2) How is the function of taboo utterances found in *American Gangster* movie?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Related to the problems above, this study covers into two major aims of the study, they are :

- 1) To find out the types of taboo utterances found in *American Gangster* movie.
- 2) To describe the functions of taboo utterances found in *American Gangster* movie.

1.4 Limitation of the Study

To limit this study, it is only focused on the taboo words which are found in *American Gangster* movie. The discussion are about the types of taboo words according to Battistella (2005: 72) and Wardhaugh (2006: 239) for the functions of taboo words, by analysing the data from *American Gangster* movie. The writer will not discuss about specific topic about the movie. The limitation here is used to make the result of the study becomes more specific.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The writer describes the significance of study on two points, those are explained in theoretical and practical significance

1.5.1 Theoretical Significance

This study is expected to give more information and enrich the specific knowledge in linguistic field especially on taboo words and the functions that used by the characters while using taboo words.

1.5.2 Practical significance

Practically, the result of this study is not only useful to help the students of English Department but also useful to help all common people in order to know more about English language especially taboo words. It is known that all people know about what is meaning behind that word. Therefore, this study gives the explanation not only about the real meaning but also tell about what taboo words is and how we should do to get the real meaning of that word.



CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE, CONCEPTS, AND THEORIES

This chapter consists of review of related literature, concepts, and theories. In review of literatures, there are two undergraduate theses and one international article journals that are relevant to the present study. It discussed the strength and weakness of each previous research and compares the difference and similarities with this current study.

2.1 Review of Related Literature

The first related literature was written by Sanjaya (2018) entitled “An Analysis of English Taboo Words in Movie *Get Hard*”. The previous study aimed to determine the forms, functions and motives of English taboo words which are contained in movie *Get Hard*. The previous study utilized descriptive qualitative method. The data research is obtained taboo words in script movie *Get Hard*. The previous study used theory by Jay (1992: 2- 9) for the types of taboo word such as cursing, profanity, blasphemy, obscenity, vulgarity, slang, epithets, insulting ethnic-racial slurs, and scatology. For the function of taboo words the previous study used theory by Patrick (2013: 292-294) such as intra-individual functions and inter-individual functions. The result of the previous study found 279 data types of taboo words. In the types of taboo words, the highest amount of data is obscenity (91), the second is epithets (44), the third is Insult and slurs (41), the fourth is vulgarity (38), the fifth is slang (33), the sixth scatology (14), the seven

is cursing (11) the eight is profanity (7), the lowest is blasphemy (0). The most function of taboo words in previous study is hostility. Meanwhile, the majority motive of using taboo words in previous study is anger.

The strength of the previous study is the related theories which were used to explain her finding. The weakness of the previous study was informal form, the previous study used bullets and numbering in his thesis. The advantage of the previous study was brief explanation of the finding. The disadvantage of the previous was the example, the previous study did not give the example to in types and functions of taboo word. The benefit of that the writer can realize from the previous study as the role model to make this research. The similarities of previous study with the recent study both of them concern with similar topic, which is taboo word and also use movie as the data source. Meanwhile differences of the previous study and the recent study is the writer focuses on types of taboo words used theory by Battistella (2005: 72) and functions of taboo words used theory by Wardhaugh (2006: 239).

The second related literature was written by Himawan (2020) entitled “Taboo Words in *A Few Less Man* Movie”. The previous study focuses on the types of taboo words and the function of taboo words spoken by the characters in the movie *A Few Less Man*. The previous research is a qualitative descriptive study. The purpose of the previous study is to explain the types and functions of taboo words in the movie. The data from the previous study are in form of words and sentences containing taboo words in the subtitles of the movie. The previous study used the theory by Jay (1999) to analysis the types of taboo words such as cursing,

epithets, obscenity, profanity, blasphemy, insulting, vulgarity, slang and scatology. For the function of taboo words the previous study used the theory by Liedlich (1973) such as create attention, discredit, provoke violent confrontation, endearment, interpersonal identification, and provide catharsis. The previous study uses the documentation method in collecting data. The results of this study consisting of two analyses. The previous study found 270 data about the types of taboo words. In the types of taboo words, the highest amount of data is obscenity (62), the second is vulgarity (41), the third is slang (39), the fourth is epithet (36), the fifth is cursing (20), the sixth is scatology (14), the seven are profanity (11) and blasphemy (11), the lowest is insult (9). The previous study found 229 data about the function of taboo words. In the function of taboo words, the highest amount of data endearment (57), the second is create attention (47), the third is provide catharsis (39), the fourth is discredit (32), the fifth is interpersonal identification (29), and the lowest is provoke violent confrontation (25).

The strength of the previous study was the related theories which were used to explain his finding. The weakness of the previous study is his data which not clear enough. The explanation became little bit confusing the reader. The advantage of previous study was the example that can be understood by the reader easily. The disadvantage of previous study was he used informal form for his thesis. The benefit of that the writer can realize from his thesis, the writer can use his thesis as a role model to make this research. The similarities of the previous study with the recent study that both of them concern with similar topic, which is taboo words and also use the movie as the data source. Meanwhile difference of the previous study and

the recent study is the theory that the writer used, in the recent study the writer used theory by Battistella (2005: 72) and Wardhaugh (2006: 239).

The third is an article by Rahmayani and Fitrawati (2018) entitled “Analysis Types and Functions of Taboo Words in *The Wolf of Wall Street* Movie”. This article used theory by Jay (1999) and Batistella (2005) to analyse types of taboo words and the theory of Wardaugh (2006) and Liedlich (1973) to analyse the function of taboo words. The data of this research are in form of sentence or utterance containing taboo language which spoken by every character in the movie. The data were collected from the movie taken from the www.layarkaca21.com. The researcher choose the utterance that containing the taboo language and grouped them into types and functions of taboo words. Type of research was descriptive research. This journal described data and characteristic about the population or phenomenon being studied. This journal also belongs to qualitative research supporting by quantitative research. Based on data analysis, the researcher found 122 data sources for types of taboo words that utterances by the character in the movie and 118 data sources for the functions of taboo words. From nine types of taboo words, it was found that there are 6 types of taboo languages with the highest percentage in the movie namely: obscenity (64,8%), epithets (13,1%), profanity and vulgarity (8,2%), slang (3,2%) and cursing (2,5%). For the function of the use of taboo language was found 6 functions with the highest percentage as well. They are to creation of strong interpersonal (35,6%), provide catharsis (24,5%), and to draw attention to oneself (17,8%), endearment (11,9), to be provocative (7,7%) and to show contempt (2,5%).

The strength of the previous study was the brief explained. The weakness is about the theory explanation on the previous study became little bit confusing the reader. The advantage of the previous study is formal from the beginning until the end of this journal. The disadvantage is too long and not to the point. The benefit of the previous study is about the phenomenon of taboo words among the movie *The Wolf of Wall Street* and give more information about taboo words. The previous study has similar topic which is taboo words and also the data source with the recent study which is movie and both of them used theory by Battistella (2005) and Wardhaugh (2006). The different is the previous study used more than one theory such as theory by Jay (1996) and Batistella (2005) to analyse types of taboo words and the theory of Wardaugh (2006) and Liedlich (1973) to analyse the function of taboo words.

2.2 Concepts

It is important to present the concept used in this study in order to understand this study. The concepts that were explained in this study are the concept of Sociolinguistics, Taboo words, Movie.

2.2.1 Sociolinguistics

Sociolinguistic is the combination of sociology and language. It deals with the use of language in society involving cultural norms, context and expectation. Its attempt to get a better understanding on how to use language in society. According to Chaer and Agustina (2004) sociolinguistic is the study of the characteristics of

language varieties, the characteristics of their functions, and characteristics of the speakers as these constantly interact, change and change one another within speech community. In addition, Holmes (2013) says that sociolinguistic is concern with the relationship between language and the context in which is used.

2.2.2 Taboo Words

Taboo is actually connected with something that is avoided and forbidden to talk about. Allan and Burridge (2006: 1) assert that taboo originates from social restriction on one's behaviour which can bring about uneasiness, harm and injury. Since it is resulting in uneasiness, harm, and injury, people in the society are supposed to avoid taboo which has a vulgar sense.

The word taboo is borrowed from Tongan, a language spoken by Polynesians in the Pacific archipelago, where any sacred or humble things are forbidden to touch or even to talk about. According Allan and Burridge (2006:1-2) Taboo or known as Tabuis a Tongan term that arise out of social constrain on the individual's behaviour where it can cause discomfort, harm or injury. Fomkin (2003:489) also says that the taboo language was borrowed from Tongan, a politeness language, in which refer to acts that are forbidden, or to be avoid.

According to Wardhaugh (2000:234), taboo is the prohibition or avoidance in any society of behaviour believed to be harmful to its members in that it would cause them anxiety, embarrassment, or shame. In the statement above, Wardhaugh tried to emphasize that a certain object can only be referred to only in certain circumstances. It also means that the use of taboo words can create misunderstanding between two people who are involved in a conversation if they

have different knowledge since, they belong to different societies and different circumstances. In addition, Freitas (2008:26) who states that certain words and expressions may be considered as taboos for certain people, especially when these words and expressions are used by other social class members.

2.2.3 Movie

According to Stam (2000) movies also known as films are type of visual communication which use moving pictures and sound to tell stories of inform (help people to learn). People in every part of the world watch movies as type of entertainment, a way to have fun. For some people, fun movies can mean movies that make them laugh, while for others it can mean movies that make them cry or feel afraid. Most movies are made so that they can be shown on big screens for a period of time (ranging from a few weeks to several months), movies are shown on pay television or cable television, and sold or rented on DVD disks or videocassette tapes, so people can watch the movies at home. We also download or term movies, later movies are shown on television stations.

2.3 Theories

There are two theories that are used in this study. The theories are used in order to solve the problem of the study. The main theory of this study is proposed by Battistella (2005: 72) for types of taboo words. Also the theory for the functions is proposed by Wardhaugh (2006: 239).

2.3.1 Types of Taboo Words

Taboo words in its usage, refer to several of offensive speech. Technically, speaking taboo words is usually wishing harm on a mental of person. According to Battistella's (2005: 72) states that the use of taboo words is used comprehensively here to include categories such as epithets, profanity, vulgarity, obscenity. Further explanation of each category will describe with following example of taboo words.

2.3.1.1 Epithets

The main characteristic of taboo of epithets were that various types of words or expression which contained slurs, racial slurs, ethnic slurs or sexual slurs. The words that shown of epithets are *Chinese, Nigger, Nigga, Faggot, Menudo, Chow mein, Bitch, Motherfucker, Bastard, Whore, Pussy White male and Puto*. Jay (in Doyle 2006: 2-3) defines epithet as a short but strong blast of passionate language which is triggered by frustration or anger such as *son of a bitch*.

For example:

Tell the *bastard* to mind his own business! (Ljung, 2011)

John is a boring son of a *bitch*! (Ljung, 2011)

2.3.1.2 Profanity

The main characters of profanity are that every word is associated with religious cursing. The words that shown of profanity are *Jesus, Christ, Damn, Goddamn, Bloody, Hell, God and Holyshit*.

For example:

Let the *goddamn* man talk! (Swan, 1995)

What the *hell* are you doing? (Ljung, 2011)

2.3.1.3 Vulgarities

Vulgarity types deal with a word that mention sexual anatomy and excretory function. The words that shown vulgarity are *Cock, Ass, Nut, Dick, Asshole, Cunt, Tits, Buttock and Balls*.

For example:

Get your *ass* in gear! (Jay, 2008)

All of you *asshole*! (Swan, 1995)

2.3.1.4 Obscenities

Obscenity type deals with a word that word of expression that are prohibited from public use because it is considered as lack of morality since they mention sexual activity and excretory function which can generate disgust. The words that shown obscenity are *Fuck, shit, fuckin', fucker, bullshit, fuckhead, sucker and suck*.

For example:

What the *fuck* do you mean? (Ljung, 2011)

They were *fucking* like rabbits. (Karjalainen, 2002)

2.3.2 The Functions of Taboo words

Taboo words are usually uttered because there is a reason behind them. According to Wardhaugh (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. To give a clear

explanation of the functions of taboo words, below are brief descriptions of the functions completed with examples in conversations.

2.3.2.1 To Draw Attention to Oneself

Sometimes people utter taboo words in order to get the attention from the listener. Mc Edward (in Mc Guire 1973: 5-6) explains that the speakers should gain the interest through the use of strong, powerful language whose connotation can stimulate an instant reaction from the audience. Therefore, people use taboo words which are believed to have power in gaining listener's attention because of its strong connotation.

For example:

Let the *goddamn* man talk! (Ljung, 2011)

2.3.2.2 To Show Contempt

The use of taboo words in conversation between two people can also mean to show contempt. According to *Oxford Advance Learner's Dictionary* (1995: 249) *contempt* means the impression in which a person or may be something is totally useless and cannot be regarded. In other words, when someone tries to show contempt by using taboo words, he or she will insult the addressee by uttering words that can offend their pride.

For example:

They were *fucking* like rabbits! (Karjalainen, 2002)

What the *hell* are you doing? (Ljung, 2011)

2.3.2.3 To be Provocative

When someone utters taboo words, he or she may have an intention to provoke a certain response such as violation or anger from others. This is in line with Rothwell (in Fitzgerald 2007: 17) who says that verbal obscenity can be the most efficient symbolic process offered to protester intended for inviting chaotic reaction. Taboo words are considered successful when the response is suitable with the speaker's expectation.

For example:

Hit that *nigger*! (Richard, 1985)

2.3.2.4 To Mock Authority

Sometimes people use taboo words when they are not satisfied with public images such as government and institutions. Rothwell (in Mc Guire, 1973: 6) asserts that verbal obscenity communicates a significant hatred for society's rule, a rebellion against power as well as impertinence for things that are considered sacred. In other words, people used taboo words because they want to express their disappointment about reality that are different from what they have expected. Therefore, some people may prefer to use certain taboo words that are directed to mock authority in order to show their disbelief about governmental stuffs.

For example:

What the *fuck* do you mean? (Ljung, 2011)