

Taboo Words in Rap Song Lyrics

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Abstract-Taboo words are always associated with inappropriate language and it cannot be used in daily conversations. Therefore, taboo words still manage as offensive and savage words in most languages, such as English. 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 in some society, people are getting more relaxed to accept taboo words. The purpose of this study is to describe the types of taboo words in Eminem's song lyrics. This study is a descriptive qualitative research. The data collected by selecting and analyzing containing taboo words in the lyrics and analyzed using a theory of types of taboo words proposed by Batistella (2005). Based on the data analysis obscenity is the most appearing type in this research because it is considered to be the most effective way to insult someone. The least frequently used taboo word is profanity. Therefore, it can be noticed that profanity is not effective enough to be used as an offensive word to debase other people's pride, because it is usually categorized as religions cursing and includes the foul-mouthed use of what is considered to be sacred.

Keywords--Eminem song lyrics, taboo word, the meaning of taboo words, types of taboo words

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Research

Eminem is one of the rap singer. He is an American rapper, songwriter, and music producer. Eminem is one of the best-selling musicians of the 21st century and one of the most influential rappers of all time. In Eminem's song, it can be seen that so many taboo words available, for example, the lyrics from "Cleaning-out My Closet" song's contain some words that can be considered as taboo words, such as bitch, fucking, hell and shit that have a type and the function. Wardhaugh (2000) said that taboo is prohibition or avoidance that cannot be used by human being in any society because it will hurt its members and make them feel anxious, embarrassment, or shame. Taboo words are always considered as inappropriate words to utter in daily conversation, because these taboo words are associated to harsh meaning. For Indonesian people taboo words are the same as reproach.

However, there are still argumentations in defining the taboo words by human being. Some people think and believe that taboo is something that has negative meaning, and emotion to express the negative types of feeling towards the others, especially when it used in public areas or to someone who older than us. On the other hand, nowadays the attitude

towards the function of taboo words has already changed. Based on Anggita (2015), she said that the changes happened because of the legal sanctions were getting more relaxed to accept taboo words.

As a result, taboo words are now commonly found when someone expresses the emotive feeling. Some people believe that by using taboo words is one of the ways that can be used to convey or to express their feeling and emotion. Sometimes it mostly happen when someone in emotional condition because that word unintentionally spoken and they cannot control the words or when someone speak and communicate with their close friend in order to express that they closely enough as a friend.

Batistella (2005) suggests four types of taboo words, i.e. epithets, profanity, vulgarity, and obscenity.

So, based on the phenomenon above, the research is conducted to analyze the taboo words in the lyrics of Eminem albums under the title "Taboo Words in Eminem Song Albums".

B. Problem of the Research

From the explanation above, the researcher formulates the research problem as follow: What categories of taboo words are found in Eminem songs

C. Objective of the Research

Based on the formulation of the problem, the objective of the research is to Categorize the taboo words in Eminem songs.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Taboo Word

1. Definition of Taboo Words

According to Wardhaugh (2000), taboo is the prohibition or avoidance in any society of behavior believed to be harmful to its members in that it would cause them anxiety, embarrassment, or shame. Consequently, so far as language is concerned, certain things are not to be said or certain objects can be referred to only in certain circumstances, for example, only by certain people, or through deliberate circumlocution, i.e. euphemistically. Tabooed subjects can vary widely: sex, death, illness, excretion, bodily functions, religious matters, the supernatural. But quite often they extend to other aspects of social life.

Trudgill (2000) stated, taboo refers to something prohibited, and he described taboo as following:

[b]ehavior which is believed to be supernaturally forbidden, or regarded as immoral or improper; it deals with behavior which is prohibited or inhibited in an apparently irrational manner”.

Being more specific, in An Introduction to Sociolinguistics, Wardhaugh (2006) defines taboo in the following way:

Taboo is the prohibition or avoidance in any society of behavior believed to be harmful to its members in that it would cause them anxiety, embarrassment, or shame. It is extremely strong politeness constraints. Consequently, so far as language is concerned, certain things are not to be said or certain objects can be referred to only in certain circumstances.

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.

This idea is also brought by Freitas (2008) 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. An example of this case is the use of taboo words like n*gg*r. The word n*gg*r can be extremely offensive if white persons use it. However, it may be used freely by some groups of black people without feeling being offended. Therefore, it can be concluded that the parameter of certain words or expressions which are thought to be taboo usually depends on the values in one society, the relationship between the speaker and listeners, and also the circumstances where the words are uttered.

2. Types of Taboo Word

Batistella (2005) suggests four types of taboo words:

- Epithet is various types of slurs, such as wop, raghead, bitch, or fag”. Epithet could refer to race, ethnicity, gender, or sexuality, as well as one’s appearance, disabilities, or other characteristics, like midget, gimp, motherfucker and retard.
- Profanity can be categorized as religious cursing because it usually includes the foul-mouthed use of what is considered to be sacred. The words that belong to this type are *Jesus Christ, hell, damn, goddamn, etc.*
- vulgarity and obscenity is usually related to the level of prurience. In other words, vulgarity demonstrates the raw expression of street language . vulgarity is used to

humiliate or bring down the thing or individual referred to or described. The words that belong to this type are such as *ass, tit, etc.*

- Obscenity is defined as words or expression which involve sex differentiating anatomy or sexual and excretory function that usually uttered in rough manner. The words that belong to this type are *fuck and shit.*

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

This study conducted a descriptive qualitative design in order to describe taboo words that found in Eminem song lyrics.

B. Data and Source of Data

The data of this research are words that consist of taboo words from the lyrics of Eminem’s songs. The sources of data were selected from 10 tops Eminem songs based on <http://www.liveabout.com> (July: 2019).

C. Data Collection

The data were collected by applying documentary technique as suggested by Bogdan and Biklen (1982). The data of this research will be taken from Eminem lyric songs.. The data will be collected through some steps which are consist of:

1. Downloading the lyric songs of Eminem
2. Identifying the consisting taboo words
3. Listing the taboo words from the lyric

Instrument of the data collection is a tool or equipment used in collecting the data. In this study, the researcher will be the key of instrument that collected and observed the available data of the taboo words by Eminem in his songs.

IV. RESEARCH FINDINGS

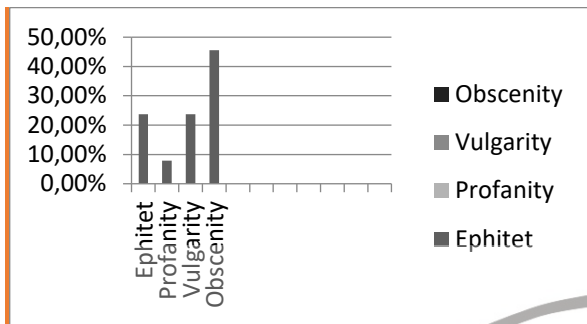
A. Data Collection and Analysis

The data collected by downloading the lyrics of Eminem’s song from the internet. Then the researcher collected the data by analyzed the lyrics which contained taboo words. After collected the data, the researcher selected to find out the types of taboo words used on Eminem’s song lyrics, after that the researcher classified based on the types which found in the Eminem’s song.

B. Taboo words in Eminem song albums

Based on data that researcher found, it is seen that there are taboo words exist in the Eminem song lyrics. It can be classified to be Epithet, Profanity, Vulgarity and Obscenity.

The percentage can be seen in the chart below:



The chart illustrates the percent listed in each type. The following is an explanation of the chart, obscenity, which found 46 times (45.54%). Then, the second highest frequency is vulgarity which found 24 times (23.77%) and epithet which found 23 times (23.77%). Finally, the least found is Profanity which appears 8 times (7.92%). Based on the range of numbers depicted in the chart above, the type most frequently found by researchers in Eminem song lyric albums is Obscenity.

V. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

A. Conclusions

Based on the data that researcher found from the lyrics, all the four types of taboo words that consist of obscenity, profanity, vulgarity, and epithet appear in the song. The highest frequency of the types of taboo words is obscenity. Obscenity appears 46 times out of 101 total data (45.54%). The lowest frequency is obtained by profanity with 8 data (7.92%). Obscenity becomes the most frequently used taboo words because it is considered as the most effective way to insult someone. Moreover, obscenity type is frequently used by the song when they want to show their disrespect toward the addressee. By using obscenity that contains disgust to the sense, is repulsive, indecent, and lack of morality, the speaker can easily debase other people's pride and their goal to hurt other people's feeling will be easily accomplished. Obscenity that contains disgust to the sense, is repulsive, indecent, and lack of morality, the speaker can easily debase other people's pride and their goal to hurt other people's feeling will be easily accomplished. The least frequently used taboo word is profanity. Therefore, it can be noticed that profanity is not effective enough to be used as an offensive word to debase other people's pride, because it is usually categorized as religions cursing and includes the foul-mouthed use of what is considered to be sacred.

B. Suggestions

There are some suggestions, it drawn based on the conclusion above. They are:

- For students of Linguistics: In analyzing taboo words, students of Linguistics had better pay more attention to the functions of taboo words which do not always mean that the speaker wants to hurt other people's

feeling. They can be functioned to show intimacy or to maintain a good relationship by calling one's name with certain types of taboo words.

- For English teacher: song which is the representation of human real life can be a good and interesting medium to learn about taboo words. Moreover, using song as the medium in learning activity will be much more fun because the students can enjoy the song as well as study the taboo words that are uttered by the singer.
- For other researchers: This research focuses on identifying and describing the types of taboo words in *Eminem song lyric*. There are other problems such as situation and the addressee of the song and social status issue which are not analyzed in this research. Similar researches that will be conducted in the future are better to discuss those problems. The other researchers can observe the relationship between the use of taboo words and gender issue. They can also observe the relationship between the use of taboo words and social status in the society.

Finally for other researcher: it is suggested to replicate this research again with other different sample to get comparison result with this research.

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