

Pros and Cons of Swearing among Girls in Surabaya

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Abstract: This study investigates the types of swear words used by Surabaya girls, the situations they swear, and the causes for their swearing. This study involved thirty-one respondents who live or stay in Surabaya. In terms of the method of this study, this study used a qualitative method to present the data. The data for this research was collected using a questionnaire technique. The findings showed that the types of swear words commonly used among girls in Surabaya are idiomatic, abusive, emphatic, and cathartic. In terms of the situation, this study found that girls used swearwords in various situations, including annoyed, mad, joking, shocked, frustrated, emphasizing something, happy, and excited. Meanwhile, the causes of girls swearing are spontaneous, to express emotions and the influence of surroundings. This study shows that girl's most frequently swear words in Surabaya are weaker. Lastly, they tend to swear when they experience negative feelings or emotions.

Keywords: Swearing, Gender, Girl, Surabaya

Introduction

Language is a means of media to help people communicate with others. Language exists in society to provide them access to the ability to express their feelings, thoughts, beliefs, and emotion. It can be in positive ways or negative ways. Negative ways of delivering language can be seen through the practice of swearing. Some societies, Indonesian society, for example, might perceive that the practice of swearing is considered an example of a wrong way of language. Swearing is mainly assumed by society as a lousy way of language.

Swearing is a regular practice in our society where most people use the type of words commonly known as swear words. Swearwords have become a common linguistic feature people use, especially the youngsters in Surabaya. Hence, this phenomenon encourages us to make it the most exciting term in language to be studied. Generally, society perceives that swear words in conversation are used to express our emotions [1]. It is presumed that people will be more relieved of their emotions if they use swear words.

However, Indonesian society mainly perceives that the practice of swearing is taboo, especially for girls. Society believes that the practice of swearing is associated with the norms in Indonesian society. They may consider a person who swears as bad because the words that people utter while swearing might be the main problem other people will get offended.

The practice of swearing may be applied differently. This may be happened due to several social factors [2]. The factors are gender, age, culture, and social background. From a gender perspective, a linguist named Robin Lakoff claimed that women or girls tend to use 'gentler' swear words than men [3]. It is associated with the phenomenon that the writer found in the society in which the society will label "girls" who swear as bad girls. It happens because the Indonesian society treated their daughter as little ladies. They expect that their little ladies will grow up as ladies with politeness, softness, gentleness, etc. Therefore, swearing is a taboo thing that happens to girls. Nowadays, the writer found that the practice of swearing has become common among girls. Due to this fact, the writer intends to investigate further through this research on the practice of swearing among girls in Surabaya.

Studies focused on this linguistic feature have been done by several researchers with different focuses. The first study was done by Anggraeni (2019) about gender identity study on Javanese taboo words in East Java. This article talks about the swear words that males and females use. The researcher also examines the frequency of men's and women's use of swear words. The last discussion in this article is that the researcher tried to identify social factors that impact the use of swear words in the East Java community. This study found that men use more vital swear words than women [4].

The similarities between this first previous study and this study are the technique, methods, and the study's object. In terms of technique, both studies use the questionnaire technique to gather the data from the respondents. Moreover, regarding the methods applied in this study, both studies

use qualitative and quantitative methods in which these two methods are used to present the findings in the form of words and numbers.

It can be summarized from the explanations above that this study not only focuses on the type of swearwords used by Surabaya's girls but also intends to analyse the situation in girls' practice of swearing and to know why the girls swear. In addition, the data are taken from the questionnaire results. Moreover, the writer applies two theories to support this study: the theory of Pinker (2007). This theory is applied to identify the type of swear words used by girls in Surabaya.

This research investigates the practice of swearing among girls in Surabaya by identifying the types of swear words used. Moreover, this research will reveal the situation of girls swearing. Lastly, this research aims at uncovering the reason why they do swearing.

Literature Review

Types of Swear Words

Pinker (2007) classified swear words into five types: 1) *Dysphemism*: Dysphemism is a binary opposition of euphemism, which is defined as a term to replace or soften the strong swear words. Dysphemism itself is well known as a negative expression to utter swear words. Dysphemism could be used to think negatively about the matter. For example, instead of saying "mental hospital," we could say Looney Bin to replace the term "mental hospital" [5]. 2) *Idiomatic Swearing* The following type of swear word is idiomatic. Idiomatically can be defined as words expressed figuratively or not the literal meaning, not referring to the real matter [6]. Finn stated that this could be used to get someone else's attention or they want to be seen as macho [7]. For example, f*ck, man, hell, yeah. 3) *Abusive Swearing* This type of swear word is used to intimidate or insult others [6]. In addition, Abusive swearing is aimed negatively toward someone else, designed to humiliate someone [5]. In addition, Finn stated that this swearing generally uses metaphors. An example of this type of swear word is f*ck; you dress like a slut! 4) *Emphatic Swearing* This swear word can stress something by mentioning size, shape, or relationship to other things [5]. Emphatic swearing can also stress or emphasize something [7]. It can be expressed positively or negatively [8]. For example, you are f*cking stupid. 5) *Cathartic Swearing* The last type is cathartic swearing. Cathartic swearing is used to express strong emotions and is commonly used to relieve strong emotions. This might occur when the speaker encounters something wrong or experience negative emotions. This type of swearing can be considered the most impolite or rude expression [7]. The swear words include *Aww, f*ck! Damn this man.*

Euphemisms on Swear Words

Euphemisms come from the Greek word *Eu* has a meaning "well," and *pheme* has a meaning "to speak" [9]. From the definition, euphemisms are a term that is used to replace or soften strong swear words. This term allows the speakers to create a nonsense equivalent of a particular swear word or substitute the sound and length [10]. Euphemisms have been created to gain comfort or politeness.

Lastly, swearing is a linguistic unit applied to express strong emotions, including anger, pleasure, and excitement [7]. Furthermore, it is generally used to express negative emotions [7]. In addition, swearing might be triggered by these six emotions, including anger, mad, pissed off, annoyed, surprise, and shock [11].

Swearing as Taboo Language

Some individuals perceive that swearing might be considered as taboo language. This perception leads swearing as a rude language. In [12], Adam mentioned that there are some aspects that might be used to refer something as taboo language. The first aspect is taboo language might violate the norms or culture within the society. Moreover, society including religion, culture, and norms are in charge to control aspects within the society. Furthermore, swearing as apart of taboo language, according to Adam [12], is inappropriate words or phrases.

Method

The research type used in this paper is descriptive qualitative. Hence, the writer analysed the data with the use of words. The data of this study are taken from the questionnaire results among girls. Regarding the data subject, the writer focuses on researching girls in Surabaya. This study involved thirty-one girls as subjects of this study who live or stay in Surabaya. This study uses a questionnaire technique to collect the data in this study. This technique allows the author to share the questions with the subject of this study.

Result

To answer the first research question, this section will present the data, which are the types of swear words from the questionnaire results.

Table 1 Swear Words and Types of Swear Words

<i>Swear Words</i>	<i>Types of Swear Words proposed by Pinker (2007)</i>	<i>Occurrences</i>
<i>Anjir</i>	Idiomatic	23
<i>Anjay</i>	Emphatic	13
<i>Asem</i>	Idiomatic	8
<i>Jancik</i>	Cathartic	6
<i>Kampret</i>	Idiomatic	5
<i>Nggaplek'i</i>	Cathartic	4
<i>Goblok</i>	Abusive	4
<i>Anjrit</i>	Emphatic	1
<i>Jambret</i>	Cathartic	1
<i>Asu</i>	Cathartic	1
<i>Cok</i>	Cathartic	1
<i>Jancok</i>	Cathartic	1
<i>Bangsar</i>	Abusive	1
<i>Jambu</i>	Idiomatic	1
<i>Oh shit</i>	Cathartic	1

Table 2 Situations Girls do Swearing

<i>Situations do Swearing</i>	<i>Occurrences</i>
Annoyed	24
Mad	17
Joking	14
Shocked	12
Frustrated	10
Point out something	8
Happy	4
Excited	1

Table 3 Cause(s) of Swearing

<i>No.</i>	<i>Cause(s)</i>	<i>Occurrences</i>
1.	Spontaneous	20
2.	To release emotion	10
3.	Environment's influence	7

Table 4 Cause(s) of not Swearing

<i>No.</i>	<i>Cause(s)</i>	<i>Occurrences</i>
1.	Environment's perception	12
2.	Not necessary	9
3.	Religion	7

Discussion

Table 1 indicates that girls in Surabaya commonly use the five swear words such as *anjir*, *anjay*, *asem*, *Jancik* and *kampret*. The words such as *anjrit*, *jambret*, *asu*, *cok*, *jingan*, *bangsat*, *jambu*, and *oh shit* are less frequently used by girls in Surabaya.

In addition, it can be seen that there are four types of swearing commonly used by Girls in Surabaya. The types are idiomatically, abusively, emphatically, and cathartically [5].

Euphemism on Swear Words among Girls in Surabaya

Euphemisms come from the Greek word *Eu* has a meaning "well," and *pheme* has a meaning "to speak" [9]. From the definition, euphemisms are a term that is used to replace or soften strong swear words. This term allows the speakers to create a nonsense equivalent of a particular swear word or substitute the sound and length [10]. Euphemisms have been created to gain comfort or politeness. Moreover, it can be concluded from this study that girls more commonly used the weaker expletives such as *anjir*, *anjay*, *asem*, and *jancik*. These weaker expletives are considered euphemisms. Euphemism, as mentioned earlier, is used to replace or soften strong swear words. The swear words such as *anjir*, *anjay*, *asem*, and *anjrit* are the forms of euphemism for the strong swear words *asu* in Javanese or *anjing* in Indonesian. In English terms, it is well known as *b*stard*. Somehow, these euphemisms words were created and became common in Indonesian society. It is to be assumed that these euphemisms words are more likely to be used because the words, *anjir*, *anjay*, *asem*, and *anjrit* sound better than the original words *asu* or *anjing*.

Meanwhile, the swear word *Jancik* comes from the strong swear word *jancok*. This can be seen that there is a change in the phoneme in which the phoneme /o/ changes into phoneme /i/ turns into *Jancik*. Girls more likely use the word *jancik*. It seems that, indeed, the word *Jancik* sounds softer or better rather than the word *jancok*. In addition, these two swear words, *jancok* and *jancik*, refer to Surabaya's dialect. The swear word *jancok* refers to sexual activity; hence it has a similar meaning to the swear word *f*ck*.

These findings, as a result, supported Sukanob-Nicolau's statement in which he stated that girls are much more familiar with using euphemisms than boys [11].

Situation Girls do Swearing

As shown in Table 2, the study found that the respondents use swear words when angry about something, and swearing words are applied in many different situations. The most common situation to do swearing among girls is when they feel annoyed with something.

1. Annoyed and Mad

We often unintentionally swear because we get annoyed by something; hence we swear. Annoyed is the most frequent situation where girls do swearing. Sukanob-Nicolau supports this finding. He revealed that swearing could be triggered by several feelings or situations, especially when someone gets annoyed.

Moreover, a negative expression, such as *mad*, could be a response to why people swear [11]. This is a common situation in which people assume someone else does swearing. Girls in Surabaya practice swearing when they get angry or mad at something. Some swear words are commonly used when they experience anger towards something: *asu*, *cok*, *jingan*, etc.

2. Joking

In terms of joking, this situation also proves that swearing can happen. Fourteen respondents also agreed that they mainly use swear words when joking. Dynel (2012) indicated that foul language, such as swear words tends to generate humor [12].

3. Shocked

Another situation that may trigger someone to swear is shocking. A shocking situation might happen spontaneously because someone is experiencing something they did not predict or expect

to happen before. Suganob-Nicolau identified six emotions that trigger someone to do swearing, including shocked emotions [11]. This finding demonstrates that twelve students agreed to swear when they get shocked.

4. Frustrated

Swearing may occur in various situations, especially when someone gets frustrated with something. Ten respondents claimed that they swear because they feel frustrated. An example of this can be seen objectively through this study, in which ten respondents mentioned that they tend to swear when they get frustrated. Jay mentioned that the function of swearing is to express several emotions, including frustration [8].

5. Emphasizing

This study proved that eight respondents used swear words when they intended to emphasize something. This finding is correlated with the Pluszczyk theory in which swearing could occur for emphasizing [12] something such as *the f*ck, anjir, anjay*, and so on.

6. Happy and Excited

Happy and excitement can be considered positive emotions or responses which these two situations. These two conditions may trigger the practice of swearing [7]. However, this study found that girls less frequently do the swearing in these situations; four girls agreed that they use swearing words when they are happy, and only one respondent agreed that she uses swear words when they are excited.

Reasons Girls do Swearing

Several purposes influence girls to do swearing. Twenty respondents agree that they are unintentionally swearing, which girls swear because it happened spontaneously. Finn also stated that "*swearing might be planned or entirely unplanned or spontaneous* [7]." Another reason demonstrated that girls swear to express their emotions [10]. The fact that ten respondents claim they swear to express their emotions. The last thing that influences girls to practice swearing is because of their surroundings. Seven respondents revealed that they got used to practicing swearing because their surroundings influenced them. It is well-linked with Suganob-Nicolau's statement, which stated that people easily trigger young generations in terms of how they learn or get used to swearing compared to media, such as TV, YouTube, and so on [11]. Suganob-Nicolau also proved that the impacts of people are more effective and vital for youngsters than the influences of media [11].

Reasons of Girls not Swearing

1. Environment's Perception

The most frequent reason why girls avoid applying swearwords in their daily lives is that society is very sensitive towards the practice of swearing. This is also associated with society's assumption that swear words are considered taboo or forbidden to speak because it may lead someone to get offended. As mentioned by Pluszczyk [12], the practice of swearing as offensive words may harm the social norms.

2. Unnecessary

Nine respondents revealed that they avoid the practice of swearing because it is something unnecessary. It is simply because they just do not get any impact of swearing; hence they avoid it. This is correlated with Pluszczyk [12], who assumed that swear words as taboo language are considered inappropriate and are being referred as a negative language.

3. Religion

As mentioned previously, swear words are commonly considered taboo language because society assumes that these words are not necessary to be uttered. Moreover, it is not always associated with the social perception, but also it is concerned with other circumstances, especially religion. Some respondents revealed that they avoid swearing because of religious circumstances. In particular religions, they believe that human beings should avoid inappropriate language that tends to be rude or offensive. This study found that seven respondents avoid swearing due to religious circumstances. This thing has been discussed earlier by Pluszczyk [12] who classified some features of taboo language. One of them is a feature by which religious circumstances are controlling taboo language.

Conclusion

The practice of swearing can be considered a lousy term in language. Even though it is considered foul language, most people, including girls, get used to swearing daily. Girls in Surabaya use four types based on Pinker's theory (2007): *idiomatic swearing*, *abusive swearing*, *emphatic swearing*, and *cathartic swearing*. In addition, this study showed agreement with Lakoff's statement by which she found that women tend to use "weaker expletives," known as euphemisms, rather than stronger ones. Moreover, this study revealed that girls used swear words in different situations: annoyed, mad, frustrated, shocked, emphasize something, happy, and excited. There are three everyday purposes they do swearing: swearing unintentionally, expressing strong emotions, and triggers from surroundings.

It would be better for further research with a similar focus to apply the interview technique to get the data from the respondents in more detail and deep. This suggestion would be beneficial to accomplish the study accurately and objectively. Moreover, this study also limits the investigation of girls in Surabaya. As a suggestion for the following research, it would be better to analyze both genders, boys and girls or men and women, as the study subjects.

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