

Analysis of Taboo Language Used in The Wolf of Wall Street Movie

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Abstract: This study examined taboo language in the film "The Wolf of Wall Street" to achieve two goals: 1) identifying its types, and 2) describing its functions. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, the researcher utilized Batistella (2005: 72) and Wardhaugh (2006: 239) theories to analyze the language types and functions. Findings showed four taboo language types: Efficacy, Obscenity, Vulgarity, and Obscenity. Four functions were identified: Drawing Attention, Showing Contempt, Being Provocative, and Mocking Authority. The predominant type was profanity, appearing 82 times (51.25%), followed by obscenities (30 times, 18.75%), epithets (28 times, 17.5%), and vulgar language (20 times, 12.5%). The most frequent function was drawing attention, occurring 63 times (48.84%), followed by provocation (35 times, 27.13%), contempt (26 times, 20.15%), and authority mockery (5 times, 3.87%).

Keywords: Taboo Language, The Wolf of Wall Street, Movie

INTRODUCTION

Communication is very important in everyday human life, in accordance with the function of communication that is informative in social life. Through communication a person can fulfill emotional needs and improve mental health, learn about the meaning of love, affection, respect, pride, envy, and even hatred (Mudjiono, 2012). Social communication implies that communication is a very important thing in interacting with other people in various fields so that they can work together with others. Therefore, in order for social contact to function and be channeled properly, humans need language as a means of communication.

Language as a means of communication has an important role in social life which places humans as a social community. Through language, humans can convey ideas and intentions towards something. Therefore, everyone has a different way of choosing a variety of language that can emphasize the intent or purpose of something. Some people may prefer to use strong language when they are sad or angry (Rabiah, 2018). For example, someone sometimes uses certain words that are considered bad language and are actually not worth using. One way to express their feelings is to use taboo language.

The term taboo is part of a culture and is considered to have special powers, generally taboo is what is considered sacred and cannot be touched or spoken because it is considered taboo or forbidden. In every culture, there are taboo actions that shouldn't be done and taboo words that shouldn't be said (Irwan, 2021). Both are related to each other



because some taboo actions have the appropriate taboo words, while others do not (Fairman, 2009:27). Taboo is a phenomenon that is widespread throughout the world, some words or sentences are now very sensitive to talk about.

Several taboo words or sentences are often found in movies. The actors in the movie say taboo words to attract the attention of the movie's audience, but there are audience who do not understand the taboo words in the movie because they are influenced by several factors. One of the factors that affect speech that cannot be understood is cultural factors so that listeners do not understand some of the things conveyed in the movie, one example is in the *The Wolf of Wall Street* movie.

This research aims to reveal some of the correct words or sentences in the movie. The emphasis is on some facts that listeners consider taboo. Some words and expressions have been used for such a long time that they are common in language usage, and therefore may not be considered taboo today. The *The Wolf of Wall Street* movie explains about the habit of doing his job in various criminal acts such as being involved in criminal cases, thus limiting certain practices in associating with people, objects, or places. Based on this statement, the researcher is interested in examining the use of taboo words or language in *The Wolf of Wall Street* movie because there are some character expressions that are not understood by viewers.

Language can vary in any form and this is known as the phenomenon of language. Taboo words are one of the phenomena of language. The use of taboo words will cause problems for speakers and listeners who do not understand each other about their meaning. Therefore, researcher are interested in analyzing problems that may occur through a movie which is a representation of human life and society. In this case, the researcher uses *The Wolf of Wall Street* movie as a object of research.

In this case, the researcher took several previous studies which were used as references related to the taboo language contained in the movie such as in movies (Anggita's, 2015; Taufik, 2017; Dina, 2020; Siregar, 2021). However, although they have investigated in the same object as this current study that is movie, their objects were different from the present research, which is The Wolf of Wall Street movie . Thus, the results of the present research may contribute to putting more inside the literature on taboo language research in the movie. The difference between previous research and this research is in the object to be studied, while the similarity is that they both research taboo language.

METHOD

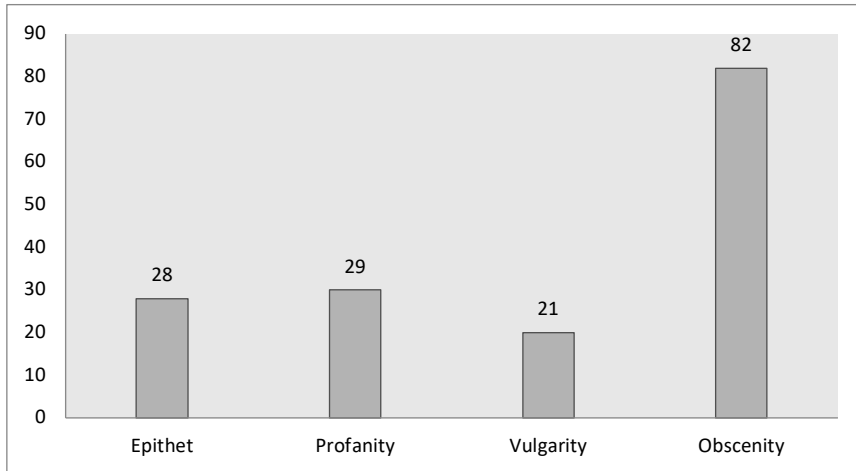
Based on the object of this research, the method used to analyze and describe the types of taboo language and its functions in the Wolf of Wall Street movie is a descriptive qualitative method. Researchers employed this method because it analyzed and explained the data to find answers of the problem formulation. The source of data in this research were obtained from the utterances spoken by the characters in The Wolf of Wall Street movie. To collect data, researchers employed himself (Human Instrument) as the instrument. In this research, researchers as human instruments and documents as research instruments.

Several steps were done during data collection. First, the researchers looks at the whole story In The Wolf Of Wall Street movie and search for movie scripts from the internet. Second, the researchers watch the movie again and check the match of the transcript with the movie. Finally, the researchers classifying and transferring the selected dialogues containing taboo words.

The data was analyzed by employing several steps according to Miles and Huberman (2012). First, data reduction, in this step, the data are concluded, grouped, and focused on the main problem of the research. After the data were collected, they were categorized and analyzed the utterances containing taboo words as the raw data into the table. Data reduction occurs continuously through analysis. In the early stages, it happens through editing, segmenting, and summarizing data. Second, data display, in this second step, after the data are reduced, the researcher categorized data to explain the types and the functions of the taboo words in the dialogues. Finally, draw and verify conclusions, this last step is conclusion drawing researcher find the result or information and make it as the new hypothesis or knowledge of the research. So, the researcher found the types and function of taboo words.

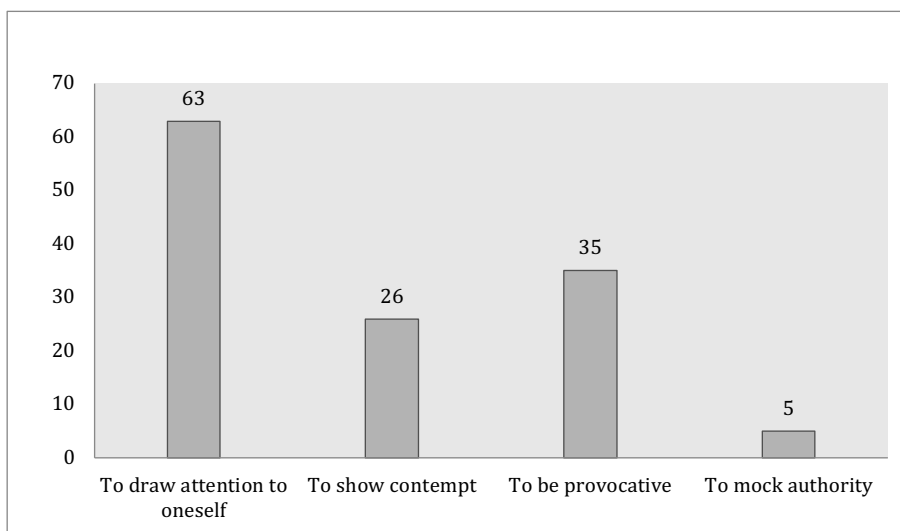
RESULTS & DISCUSSION

To answer these two questions, two theories (Batistella; 2005 and Wardhaugh; 2006) have been employed to analyze the movie. The results of the analysis are presented in the picture as follows:



Graph 1. Types Of Taboo Words Found In “The Wolf Of Wall Street” Movie

There are four kinds of taboo words, namely obscenity, profanity, vulgarity, and epithets. All of them appear in the conversations spoken by the characters in the movie. From the table above it can be seen that the most dominant type used by the characters is obscenity which appears 82 times (51.25 %). Then, the second highest frequency was profanity appeared 29 times (18.15%), while epithet which appeared 28 times (17.5%) and the least was vulgarity which appeared 21 times (13.125%).



Graph 2. Function of taboo words found in the “The Wolf of Wall Street” Movie

Graph above shows that all the functions of taboo words are found in movie. However, each has a different frequency. There are four functions of taboo words, namely to show contempt, to draw attention to oneself, to be provocative, and to ridicule authority. Of the four functions, the highest frequency of the taboo word function is to show to draw attention to oneself which appears 63 times (48,84%), in the second position is to be provocative which appears 35 times (27.13%). Furthermore, to show contempt takes the third position with 26 mentions (20.15%) and the last position is to mock authority which only occurs 5 times (3.87%).

Discussion

Taboo words are the variations of language used by people in their daily life. Usually, people use taboo words to express their feelings specifically bad feelings. For example, when they are getting mad at someone, disappointed, dissatisfied, etc. they will use taboo words for certain reasons. In this research, the analysis of the types and functions of taboo words elaborated based on two theories, they are Batistella to analyze the types of taboo words and the theory of Wardhaugh to analyze the function of taboo words.

Types of Taboo Language

Obscenity

Obscenity words are believed to be banned from public use because they involve rejection of the senses , are disgusting, immodest and repugnant to morality. In the Wolf of Wall Street movie, obscenity appears 69 times and one of them is presented below:

Donnie : I am really appreciative for this *fucking* job (21) . I am really enjoying it, I am really happy with what you are doing. Actually, I got you a little present
Jordan : You got me a **present**?

The dialogue above contains a kind of obscenity because Donnie utters the word *fucking* which usually describes sexual activity in a literal sense. Moreover, the word can trigger disgust so it is strictly restricted to general use. The conversation occurred when Donnie and Jordan met at a restaurant to discuss work. Before they met at the restaurant, Jordan had told Donnie about the job he was doing which could generate around \$25,000 in one month and Donnie was interested in joining Jordan. A few days later they met at a restaurant, and the dialogue ensued, Donnie was very enthusiastic about the job to Jordan that he was very happy and satisfied to join the job so he expressed his pleasure using taboo language. Jordan also used taboo language to express his pleasure that Donnie wanted to reward him for his accomplishments at the job.

Profanity

Profanity is the second most frequently used type of taboo word. In this movie, profanity appears 29 times with a percentage of 18,125%. Profanity occurs when someone uses the term religion in a profane, secular, or indifferent way. In the Wolf of Wall Street movie, the most common profanities used in conversation between the characters are Jesus Christ and Goddamn. Examples of conversations in the movie can be seen as follows:

- Dwayne : We're helping them finance houses, we're helping them buy their wife a diamond ring. A boat maybe.
- Jordan : Stuff regular or are you guys. What are you doing here?
- Dwayne : Uhh. Sort of.
- Jordan : Sort of? *Jesus Christ* (48) , the spread on these is huge
- Dwayne : Yeah. And that's the point.

This dialogue occurs when Jordan goes to the investor centre office to apply for a job and meet with the owner. The owner of the investor's office explained to Jordan about the commission he received from the work that the income was 50% for each client. Jordan was surprised by the benefits offered so uttered the taboo word Jesus Christ. A taboo word that Jordan utters in dialogue to express an emotional reaction to the work to be done at the investor center.

Epithet

Epithet is a type of taboo word that appears a lot in the third place in the dialogue between characters in The Wolf of Wall Street movie. Epithet is mentioned 28 times and gets a percentage of 17,5 %. In this movie, epithets are shown in words such as motherfucker and bitch which characterize the use of provisional sexuality. Here is an example of epithet from dialogue from this movie.

- Jordan : Relax, sweetheart. Relax
- Teressa : Son of a *fucking bitch* !(50)
- Jordan : Okay... Geez!

The conversation ensued when Teressa saw Jordan with another woman in a car on the side of the road and she stopped the car. Teressa's guess turned out to be correct that Jordan was having an affair with the woman. Teressa pulled Jordan out of the car and started hitting Jordan for what he had done. Jordan still persuaded his wife to calm down, but Teressa immediately answered with the words Son of a fucking bitch!. The word bitch in the dialogue is categorized as an epithet because it is one of the many slurs that refer to the term sexuality. Bitch originally meant bitch but takes on a different meaning when used as a derogatory word. If addressed to a man, the word means a homosexual who

plays the role of a woman.

Vulgarity

In their findings, researchers found 21 vulgar words that occur during conversations between characters in the *The Wolf of Wall Street* movie. This type has the least amount among the other types of taboo words. An example showing vulgarity can be seen in the following conversation.

Donnie : I'll give you a call, you come pick it up
 Brad : You give me a call?
 Donnie : When it gets here, I'll give you a call and you'll pick it up
 Alliya : Well, we don't fucking work for you, man!
 Donnie : Sweetheart, you have my money taped to your *tits*. okay? Technically, you do work for me.(89)

The dialogue above took place at Jordan's House when Donnie ordered Brad to take his money somewhere, but suddenly Alliya responded to Donnie's words as if refusing his order. Then Donnie responds to Alliya's words by saying vulgar words to humiliate or put Alliya down for not responding well to Donnie's orders.

2. Functions of Taboo Language

Based on the research that has been done on the use of taboo language functions in this movie, it is found that the four functions of taboo words, including to draw attention to oneself, to be provocative, to show contempt, and to mock authority are presented with several examples in the points below. The results of the study show less data on the use of the taboo language function compared to the focus of the first research point regarding the type of taboo language, because the characters in the *Wolf of Wall Street* movie tend to speak taboo language to create strong interpersonal relationships.

To draw attention to oneself

To draw attention to oneself appears the most, namely 63 times in this study with a percentage of 48,84%. This function can occur when someone utters a taboo word that has a strong connotation to attract the listener's attention. Moreover, by using strong language such as taboo words, listeners will immediately respond to the speaker's words. There are some examples to draw attention to yourself.

Jordan's Father : What are these sides? They cure cancer?
 Donny : The side did cure cancer, that's the problem. That's why they were expensive
 Jordan : *Shut the fuck up* (28)

The conversation ensued when Jordan's father found out about Jordan's heavy monthly expenses so he met Jordan in his office and asked why. Jordan kept silent when his father asked about the expenses, but suddenly Donny answered Jordan's father's question with a joke. Jordan responded to Donny's words with taboo words to stop saying unimportant things so at that time Jordan's friends fell silent and looked at Jordan.

To be Provocative

To be a provocative function takes second place and it happens 35 times out of the entire conversation in *The Wolf of Wall Street* movie. This function occurs when a speaker utters taboo words to provoke a certain response from listeners such as offense or anger. Based on the research that has been done, an example to become a provocative function is shown in the following dialog.

Donnie : You know what else? You dress like shit, so fuck you

Brad : (hits Donnie)

Donnie : *Oh Jesus*(92)

The dialogue occurred when Jordan and Brad were talking about an agreement to order Brad to pick up Donnie's money, but Brad refused because he felt that Donnie's men were not the ones who could be ordered around like that. Donnie overheard the conversation between Jordan and Brad, he said you dress like shit, so fuck you , which provoked Brad's emotions and then he hit Donnie. Donnie's words were a taboo sentence for provoking Brad so he hit him.

To show contempt

To show contempt appears 26 times with a percentage of 20,15 %. This function can occur when people say taboo words to show their feelings of disrespect for the other person, it can be said that the speaker's aim is to offend their opponent's pride because they feel that their opponent is completely worthless. An example of its use can be seen in the dialog below.

Jerry Fogel : *You are lower than pond scum*. You got a problem with that? Jordan?

Jordan : Nope. No problem at all.(4)

The dialogue above occurs when Jordan first starts work, he enters the office door and meets Jerry Fogel. Jerry Fogel was the first person to talk to Jordan in the room, he talked and said obscene things to Jordan as a new employee. Jerry said that Jordan was lower than pond scum, his words really demeaned Jordan as one of the new employees at that time. His words deeply offended Jordan who showed contempt and disrespect towards him.

To mock authority

To mock authority, it has the lowest frequency of other functions of taboo words and from 129 data, this function only appears 5 times with the lowest presentation of 3,87%. This function can occur when people utter taboo words because they are dissatisfied with public images such as governments and institutions. To make the explanation clearer, a usage example demonstrating the mock authority function presented below.

Jordan : Fucking miserable pricks, I know you can't afford them! *Fucking cheap fucks* (71)

Jordan's words in the example above occurred when he was interrogated by an FBI agent about a stock investment fraud case. However, during the interrogation, Jordan actually offered money to cover up his case, but the FBI agent refused. After the interrogation was over, the FBI agent left the scene and Jordan uttered taboo language indicating that he had a negative perspective on the FBI agent. This proves that Jordan has no respect for the institution.

In the analysis above, the taboo language type with the highest percentage is obscenity because this movie tells about educated people so that vulgarity, epithet and profanity types are rarely used except when they are emotional. And as for the most functions, namely to draw attention to oneself because most of this movie actors convey something in front of the audience.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of an analysis of the types and functions of taboo language in the Wolf of Wall Street movie using the theory of Batistella (2005: 72) and Wardhaugh (2006: 239) there are four types and four functions of taboo language. From the research results found is the types of taboo language found include epithet, profanity, vulgarity, and obscenity. The highest frequency of taboo words is obscenity. Obscenity appeared 69 times out of a total of 142 data found with a percentage of 48.59 %. While the lowest frequency is vulgarity which appears 20 times with a percentage of 14.08 %. The words obscenity are the most frequently used taboo words because they are considered to be the most effective way to insult someone and describe terms that characterize sex distinguish anatomy or sexual function and excretion in a harsh way, while vulgarity is the lowest taboo word because it refers to the word or expressions that contain sexual anatomy and excretory functions in a crude word that demonstrates the raw expression of street language.

The functions of the taboo language found include to draw attention to oneself, to show contempt, to be provocative and to mock authority. The highest frequency of the

function of the word taboo is to draw attention to oneself . To draw attention to oneself appears 21 times out of a total of 35 data found with a percentage of 60%. While the lowest frequency was to show contempt which appeared 3 times with a percentage of 8.57 %. To draw attention to oneself is the most frequently used taboo function because it has a strong connotation of attracting the listener's attention so that the listener will immediately respond to the speaker's words. Whereas to show contempt is the function with the lowest percentage because the character in the movie utters taboo words to provoke a certain response from listeners such as offense or anger, the application of taboo words is used to get the expected response from listeners. To show contempt appears as a function that occurs in the Wolf of Wall Street movie because it can represent the speaker's intention to use taboo words, namely to show their disrespect for others and aimed at hurting one's self-esteem.

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