

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of Study

Language is an important part of human life. Language is a tool for everyday communication to express social emotions, ideas, and information to others (Chaer, 2003). Through language, interaction with others can be formed. However, some languages are taboo and become bad for communicating called, 'swearwords'. Swearing is considered a form of language use that society views as rude and offensive behavior. (Ljung, 2011). Meanwhile, Dutton (2007) mentions that swear words carry negative connotations because they are seen as vulgar, offensive, and disrespectful.. He also stated that most people used words such as "fuck" and "damn" to express a degree of emotions and associated negative ideas with those swear words.

Typically, people swear in response to unexpected events or situations. Nurhayati (2007) explains that swear words are used in reaction to something unforeseen or undesired. Swearing is often used to express emotions like annoyance, anger, or insulting someone. Similarly, Hughes (1998) highlights that swearing draws on powerful and usually incongruous themes, such as religion, sexuality, insanity, bodily functions, and nationality, reflecting a wide range of attitudes—violent, humorous, shocking, absurd, casual, or even improbable. Swearing is observed across all age groups, including adults and children. Furthermore, it's important to remember that swear words often have different meanings depending on the speaker's situation. However, nowadays, the use of

swear words is not considered taboo anymore, it doesn't hurt to be more mindful and pay attention to the context in which it is used.

Ljung (2011) explains that swear words are commonly used to express something taboo. Richards & Schmidt (2010) and Trudgill (2000) Taboo language refers to words or expressions considered offensive or embarrassing, with an emphasis on the general discouragement of their use in public settings. Although taboo and swear words are distinct, they share similarities and are both forms of swear words. All taboo expressions fall under the category of curse words, but taboo words tend to carry more vulgar, insulting, and degrading connotations. For example, the term "bitch" is often used as an insult directed at someone. Swear words can hold various meanings and serve different functions depending on the context of the conversation and the speaker (Wintari et al., 2021). However, if a swear word is used to mock, insult, or bully someone, it is classified as a taboo word.

The use of swearing is spreading all over the world. It is undeniable that swearing also occurs in the Western world, such as in England. Phenomenons using swear words in England vary depending on the context and the audience. English people often use swear words in informal conversations or with close people. For English people, swear words are used with negative meanings, such as insulting people, hurting someone, or putting someone down. Some common English swear words include "bloody", "bastard", "dickhead", and "pollock".

England is a well-known place in the United Kingdom, and its people speak English with a British accent. The English people use swear words to express their strong negative emotions, anger, and to put someone down. Despite this, people in England still have good manners towards strangers and formal situations, they have automatically used more polite language with strangers to maintain courtesy and respect for people who are not known to be from England.

As explained in the previous explanation, swear words are no longer strange to people in England both young and old. The researcher found a phenomenon that happened in English people. In this case, English people use swear words to express negative emotions. According to Wintari (2021) in her study entitled “The Analysis of Swear Words Used by Children in Bungkulan Village Especially in: Banjar Dinas Satria” she analyzes the swear words used by children belonging to Tri Wangsa in Banjar Dinas Satria, Bungkulan Village. She explained the swear words Banjar Dinas Satria have forms, references, and functions. The results revealed that there are 3 forms of swear words, 10 references (animal terms, devils, things, body function, kinship, activity, bodily odors, disease, death, and killing), and had 5 purposes for using swearwords; to get attention, to discredit someone, to provoke, to create interpersonal identification, to provide catharsis. Meanwhile, Martinez (2020) in his study entitled “Taboo Vocative in the Language of London Teenagers” analyzes the swear words used by teenagers in London. He explained that swear words illustrate a wide variety of items in this category and show that these cannot be regarded as mere insults, since they often reinforce the bonds between young speakers as well, and indeed can even carry affectionate connotations. Most of these

terms are nouns that relate to sexual acts, unusual or abnormal human traits, or offensive comparisons to animals. Although many of these words have broadened in meaning and can now be used for both men and women, there has been little change in how they are used from the 1990s to the early 2000s. Yani et al., (2017) in their study entitled “A Comparative Study of American and Balinese Swearwords” analyze the swear words used by American and Balinese. This study shows that the similarities between American and Balinese swear words can be seen in their forms, references, and functions. There are three forms of swear words and seven references to swearing words (religion, sex, excrement, animals, personal background, mental illness, and sex activity), and also eight functions of using swear words (to draw attention, to provide catharsis, to provoke, to create interpersonal identity, integrative, aggressive, regressive, and emphasis). The differences between American and Balinese swear words are seen, Balinese swear words are only used by Balinese, and vice versa.

Nevertheless, the use of English swear words remains unclear as most researchers have not treated these issues in much detail. In the previous research, the researcher found a phenomenon among English British people who use swear words in their conversations to express negative emotions, including the forms, references, and functions, especially by the English British people. The researcher desired to investigate the forms, references, and functions of swear words among English-British people.

1.2.Problem Identification

This study originated from a phenomenon in the language used by English people in their conversation to express their bad emotions, anger, and insults to someone. The researcher saw the interest in the informal discussions used by these English people. Swear words are no longer unusual for people, especially in England, where people frequently use swear words. However, it is not familiar to people, especially those not from England, since English is the universal language. Therefore, it is important to research the forms, references, and functions of the swear words used by the English people.

1.3.Research Limitations

This study was bordered to investigate the use of swear words. This study discussed the forms, references, and functions of swear words among English people in England.

1.4.Research Questions

Based on the background of the study above, the research question of this study can be stated as follows:

- 1 What swear words are used in English?
- 2 What forms of swear words are used by English?
- 3 What references are used in the swear words in English?
- 4 What are the functions of swear words in English?

1.5. Research Objectives

Based on the research question above, the objective of the study can be formulated as follows:

1. To identify the swear words that are used in English.
2. To analyze the form of swear words found in English.
3. To analyze the references used in the swear words in English.
4. To analyze the functions of swear words in English.

1.6. Research Significance

The significances of this study are divided into two categories, namely, theoretical significance and practical significance:

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the existing theoretical framework on swearwords, particularly in the context of sociolinguistic language variation and the exploration of the relationship between language and society.

1.6.2 Practical Significance

The results of this study may hopefully be useful to people or newcomers who are visiting England for the first time and to people who want to study and work in England, so they do not feel uncomfortable with the English people who use swear words.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

a. Swear Words

Swear words are often taboo in social culture; people using swear words express intense emotions, provoke insults, and elevate. However, swear words also

serve as a joke in various contexts and a tool for bonding in social interaction (Anderson & Trugil, 1992).

b. Forms of Swear Words

According to Richard & Schmidt (2013) word is the smallest linguistic unit that occurs in speech. A phrase refers to a group of words that work together as a unit within a sentence, but do not contain both a subject and a verb, and therefore cannot stand alone as a complete sentence. Phrases function as single parts of speech in a sentence (Azar, 2009). Furthermore, clauses are words that contain a subject and a predicate. Clauses can either stand alone as a complete sentence or function as part of a larger sentence (Delahunty & Garvey, 2004).

c. References of Swear Words

The reference is the use of words or phrases in a text that refer to other elements in the sentence. There are seven references to swear words, including those related to religion, sex, excrement, animal terms, personal background, mental illness, and sexual activity (Hughes, 1998; Wijana & Rohmadi, 2007).

d. Function of Swear Words

There are five functions of swear words in English swear words including expressing emotions, drawing attention, interpersonal or group identity, aggression or emphasis, and regressive (Rothwell, 1973; Wang, 2014; Bolton & Hutton, 1997).