

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of this study, problem identification, limitation of the study, research question, objective of the study, and significance of the study.

1.1 Research Background

Language plays a crucial role in human life as a way to communicate with others (Dewipayani et al., 2017; Juidah et al., 2024). It is the main thing used to transfer information, express feelings, convey ideas, and thoughts to establish good communication with the interlocutor. Effective communication occurs when the audience or listener understands the message conveyed by the speaker in a certain context. However, there are some languages considered bad language as it resulting ineffective communication, which is called swear words (Islamiyah, 2022; Saniada et al., 2023; Yani et al., 2017).

Swearing is a linguistic behavior that conveys strong feelings and emotion (Afrilya Suryadi et al., 2021; Saniada et al., 2023; Van Lancker & Cummings, 1999). In line with that, Anderson and Trudgill (1992) stated that society regards swear words as disrespectful and offensive because of their rudeness, inappropriateness, and lack of necessity within social circumstances (Schweinberger, 2018). It can be seen from the reference of swear words as proposed by Pinker (2010), which are connected to animal, religion, scatology, sexual reproductive organ, sexual activity, kinship, disease, and mental incapacity. For instance, the

literal word “shit” in English refers to body waste, such as feces or excrement (Yani et al., 2017). However, this word turns into a swear word because the social context perceives the word “shit” as an offensive word that is considered bad and disgusting, potentially hurting the person they are talking to. This reference of swearing carries connotative meaning as a form of expression to communicate with others. Hughes (1998) mentioned people swear by, swear to do something, swear at somebody or something, and sometimes swear out of frustration. It means that swear words are parts of language expression to achieve different outcomes, including expressing anger (Juidah et al., 2024), insulting someone (Yani et al., 2017), and exaggerating or strengthening a statement.

Despite that, swear words can vary greatly depending on cultural norms in different countries (Stapleton, 2020; Stapleton et al., 2022). For instance, a specific expression considered highly offensive in one culture may be used casually in another. The study conducted by Lutzky & Kehoe (2016), for example, American swear words, notably using religious terms, can be frequent in daily conversations and may be less interpreted as an insult in informal contexts. On the other hand, the study carried out by Wisudayanti (2020) discovered in more reserved cultures such as Indonesia, Bali in particular, swearing is often viewed as highly disrespectful and inappropriate, primarily in public settings or when addressing elders. The variation of swear words highlights how cultural contexts define the limits of acceptable language use and how these differences are acknowledged across cultures. Understanding these variations is crucial in language education and tourism, as it

fosters positive cross-cultural communication, particularly with people from different countries and tourists visiting Bali.

Bali is well-known for its charm, which keeps people returning to the island (Dhika Wardhana et al., 2022). Nature conservation, friendly Balinese people, and preserved culture are the main attractions for tourists who visit Bali. Among several countries that have included Bali on their travel itineraries, Netherlands stands out as one of many countries visiting Bali. Based on the data from Central Bureau of Statistics of Bali Province (2024) a total of 121,386 visitors from Netherlands visited Bali in 2023, making it the fifth-highest number of tourists coming from European countries. With such a significant number of visitors from the Netherlands, communication gaps may surface among tourism practitioners in Bali, as language differences can become a major barrier to provide smooth services and enhance tourist experiences.

Tourism practitioners in Bali, particularly those catering to Dutch tourists, have reported difficulties in communicating effectively with their clients due to language barriers and cultural differences (Dolezal & Novelli, 2022; Nengah Astawa et al., 2018). This has resulted in misunderstandings, miscommunications, and even conflicts between two parties. The language gap between Dutch and the local language spoken in Bali has led to a reliance on translation services, which can lead to inaccuracies. This issue becomes more concerning when addressing cultural differences, particularly in the use of Dutch swear words, which can be misunderstood or seen as very offensive when translated, causing even more confusion in cross-cultural communication.

Dutch becomes the official language used in Netherlands (Jiachen, 2021), which influences communication styles, including the use of swear words. In Dutch culture, people use a variety of swear words that reflect their tendency to communicate in a straightforward and direct manner (Lin et al., 2018). For many Dutch people, swear words can be used casually or in everyday conversation, reflecting a cultural tolerance for bluntness in speech (Olson, 2024). However, in cross-cultural settings, people from other cultures may find these words extremely offensive, as they may associate them with deeply personal or painful experiences. Moreover, in Dutch culture, there is a sense of separation between formal and informal language use. While swearing might be common among friends or in informal settings (Roest et al., 2018), it is less accepted in professional or formal contexts. Understanding these nuances in the Dutch use of swear words is crucial in knowing how and when such words are used in certain social contexts, ensuring effective and respectful communication within the Dutch-speaking community.

In the field of language studies, numerous research has been carried out to explore swear words in different cultures. For instance, Sajarwa (2021) reported that French animal-related swear words are among the rudest insults because they equate humans with animals. The study found both upper and lower classes used French swear words that refer to animals such as *une espèce d'écureuil*, translated as “a squirrel” which used to imply worthlessness. Later on, Salah and Raoof (2022) discovered the use of swear words in English and Iraqi Arabic reflects the significant influence of cultural norms and social context on swearing behavior. The study found swear words references related to body parts, for instance, the English swear

word “asshole” and the Iraqi Arabic swear word “نارا بيا” (*Abu Adhan*) translated as “father of ears” connotatively refer to a person who acts foolish or stupid. The research emphasized that the context in which swear words are used is the primary factor in determining whether an ordinary word becomes a swear word. In addition, the study conducted by Saniada et al. (2023) which examined swear words used by children in Poh Bergong Village, using observation and interview methods in collecting data found the results that children in Poh Bergong Village have eighty-three forms of swearing, eleven types of swearing, and six functions of swearing.

Nevertheless, the use of Dutch swear words remains unclear as most researchers have not treated these issues in much detail. It is crucial to understand the language to enhance understanding of how some common words turn into swear words in certain social contexts, making it offensive and disrespectful to address others. Based on the explanation above, this study intends to investigate and analyze the swear words used among Dutch people in terms of their forms, references, and functions.

1.2 Problem Identification

The phenomenon of swear words used by Dutch people is regarded as language expression to achieve different outcomes, including expressing anger, insulting someone, and exaggerating or strengthening a statement. The use of swear words in Dutch is essential to understanding how and when these words are used in certain social contexts. This knowledge helps ensure effective communication and mutual respect within the Dutch-speaking

community. Therefore, this study aims to analyze swear words in terms of their forms, references, and functions used among Dutch people.

1.3 Limitation of the Study

This study will be limited on the use of swear words by native Dutch. It will focus to investigate and analyze Dutch swear words in terms of their forms, function, and reference.

1.4 Research Question

This study aims to address the following research questions:

1. What swear words are used by Dutch?
2. What types of swear word forms are used by Dutch?
3. What are the references of swear words used by Dutch?
4. What are the functions of swear words used by Dutch?

1.5 Objective of the Study

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

1. To identify swear words used by Dutch.
2. To analyze the forms of swear words used by Dutch.
3. To analyze the references of swear words used by Dutch.
4. To analyze the function of swear words used by Dutch.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study conducted with the expectation that it would be useful for many parties. The significances are:

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

This study contributed for the scientific knowledge on the use of swear words by Dutch speakers, thereby adding to the broader theoretical framework of linguistics and cultural variations of language use.

1.6.2 Practical Significance

In addition to its theoretical significance, the researcher also hopes this study can help and give practical significance for language learners and language educators in related fields, by offering insights of Dutch swear words.

a. For English Language Education Students

The result of this study contributes to a deeper understanding of cross-cultural communication within English Language Education (ELE) and serves as an additional reference for subjects related to tourism, such as tour and travel. This study helps learners communicate more naturally by increasing their awareness of the appropriate use of swearwords, enabling them to engage confidently with native speakers. Furthermore, it benefits prospective English teachers by enriching their knowledge of sociolinguistics, particularly in Dutch-speaking culture.

b. For International Students

This research will provide valuable insights into the use of swear words in Dutch, which international students can incorporate into learning materials and lessons. Furthermore, this knowledge can help learners understand language's cultural and social nuances, guide them in appropriately using language in various contexts, and foster a respectful and effective learning environment.

c. For General Society

This research enhances understanding of linguistic richness and cultural diversity, fostering appreciation for various forms of communication. Ultimately, it promotes a more connected and inclusive general society by encouraging knowledge and respect for diverse cultural traditions.

