CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this first chapter, an overview of the research will be presented. This chapter discusses the background of the study, problem identification, scope, and limitations of the research, problem statements, research objectives, and the significance of the study.

1.1. Background of The Study

The act of swearing is regarded as a component of a sociolinguistic phenomenon that has historically been the focus of research within linguistics. The importance of swearing is attributed to its role in facilitating communication among individuals, serving as a medium for emotional expression, and reflecting both social identity and cultural norms. Despite its often-taboo nature, swearing has a variety of pragmatic functions, including expressing frustration, humor, solidarity, or emphasis Dynel (2023). The effectiveness of swearing lies in its ability to elicit strong emotional responses due to its taboo nature, which is often culturally constructed rather than inherent in the words themselves. Its uniqueness lies in its versatility, which allows an expression to have many meanings related to its function. The swear word "fuck", for example, can function as an indication of anger, emphasis, or offense; the swear word "shit" can be used to express misery, displeasure, or surprise; the swear word "hell" can function as a marker of emphasis or disappointment. Thus, each swear word expression used in different situations will require different interpretations. Socially, swearing can create solidarity within a group, signaling familiarity or shared understanding among peers McEnery et al. (2023). For example, in informal situations, swearing can help foster familiarity,

especially among close friends or coworkers. Rhetorically, swear words can add emphasis or humor to a statement, making communication more interesting or persuasive.

The acceptance and impact of swearing vary widely across cultures and social groups. For example, in some communities, swearing is considered normal and even expected in casual conversation, while in others, swearing remains taboo. As Alshalabi et al. (2024) note, cultural interpretations of swearing depend on social norms, religious influences, and historical context. These factors determine which words are considered offensive and how their use is perceived. For example, religious swear words such as "Goddamn" have lost some of their taboo status in secular societies. In contrast, other forms of swearing, such as racial slurs, have come under greater criticism due to increased social sensitivities.

In today's modern era, the use of swear words is a common linguistic phenomenon frequently observed in daily interactions. Swearing has become an increasingly visible and normalized feature of public discourse, both in everyday conversation and across various forms of media. Once confined to private or informal settings, profanity now frequently appears in films, television, music, literature, and social media platforms. Although this phenomenon is not new, it remains a subject of academic debate. The prevalence of swear words in contemporary discourse differs from past usage, which was more restricted in both frequency and context. Currently, modern media has normalized swear words, raising concerns among academics and the general public. As observed by Andriani & Syamsudin (2023) Exposure to swear words in the media, especially through easily accessible digital platforms such as films and vlogs, has significantly

influenced social norms, including among younger audiences. Popular films such as The Boys, Suicide Squad, and Deadpool exemplify this trend by prominently featuring profanity not just for shock value, but as part of character development, humor, or emotional release. This normalization often raises concerns about moral degradation, as swear words can blur the boundaries of acceptable language and behavior. Akhyar & Ningsih (2023) further stated that cultural narratives depicted in the media, such as animated shows and films, influence children's perceptions of appropriate language and behavior, thereby strengthening the role of the media as a reflection and catalyst for social change.

From a critical discourse perspective, swearing in films can be viewed as an ideological tool that challenges dominant social norms and linguistic expectations. In antihero narratives, profanity often functions as a form of resistance to traditional moral values, authority, and conventional heroism, positioning characters as outsiders or rebels. Such language choices are deliberately constructed to convey defiance, authenticity, and social critique. Thus, swearing serves not only as a communicative device but also as a means of expressing ideological stance within cinematic narratives.

This concern is particularly pronounced in films, where swearing is often used in films, especially to emphasize realism, character depth, or humor. In this study, the writer investigated the category, the type, and the motives of using swear words by the main character in the "Deadpool (2016)" movie. The writer is interested in analyzing swear words in the movie because swear words are a part of the English language that are popularly used in the world of media, such as movies. The writer chose the movie "Deadpool (2016)" directed by Tim Miller, since the

identification of the main problem lies in understanding the sociocultural implications and reasons behind the explicit language used in the narrative, especially the phrases uttered by the main character, Wade Wilson (as Deadpool). This movie has a lot of swear words to be analyzed, therefore the writer wants to know the type, and the motivating main character of using swear words. The story follows Wade Wilson, a former special forces member who becomes the irreverent superhero Deadpool after undergoing an experimental treatment that gives him faster healing powers but leaves him disfigured. The movie addresses common societal issues such as mental health struggles, the consequences of violence, and the challenges of love and acceptance in a superficial world.

This study uses a sociolinguistic approach, which is particularly suited to analyzing swearing because of its emphasis on the relationship between language, society, and culture. In sociolinguistics, swearing is considered a form of language variation often labeled as "bad" or nonstandard speech, yet embedded in social meanings and interactional dynamics. Swearing is shaped not only by cultural and religious taboos but also by shifting power relations, group identities, and emotional expressions. Analyzing swearing from this perspective allows us to understand not only what is said, but also why it is said, how it functions in context, and what it reveals about social attitudes. As a result, swearing expressions differ significantly from standard language use. The sociolinguistic principles observed in the film are reflected in the language variation associated with social politeness. The film's unique blend of humor and graphic content provides an honest commentary on the absurdity of life, making it a rich subject for analysis.

Despite swearing's pervasiveness in the media, few studies have explored it

from a sociolinguistic perspective in the context of antihero films. Most existing research emphasizes pragmatic or psychological aspects rather than social variation. For example, Dynel (2012) examines swearing in anonymous YouTube comments, focusing on its incivility and pragmatic strategies such as false insults, rather than its role in social identity. Similarly, Fägersten & Bednarek (2022) study swearing in television scripts, showing how swearing functions as an interpersonal tool for affiliation, character differentiation, and audience engagement but their focus remains on interpersonal pragmatics, rather than character-based linguistic variation. While these works advance the understanding of swearing in media, they neglect how swearing construct's identity and conveys resistance in certain film genres, particularly antihero narratives. As a result, there remains a significant gap in sociolinguistic research on how swearing shapes and reflects character identities in films such as Deadpool (2016).

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the types of swearing and the motivations behind their use by the main characters in the film Deadpool (2016). Based on a sociolinguistic approach, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how swear words function as linguistic tools that reflect social identities, emotional expressions, and cultural tensions. In doing so, this study offers insights into the role of swear words in contemporary media and enriches academic discourse on language variation and media representation.

1.2. Problem Identification

The film Deadpool (2016) presents key issues that warrant critical analysis, particularly concerning its blend of humor, swearing, and serious themes. While the film is primarily a comedic superhero film, its exploration of mental health, social

identity, and the consequences of violence is often overshadowed by its frequent use of humor and explicit language. The protagonist, Wade Wilson (Deadpool), frequently employs swearing as part of his distinct comedic style, but this excessive use of swearing may affect audience perception, making it difficult to engage with the film's deeper themes fully. Additionally, the film's explicit content, including graphic violence and vulgar scenes, raises concerns regarding its suitability for general audiences. The depiction of murder, torture, and intense physical conflict contributes to the film's realism but may also be perceived as excessive, reinforcing its classification as an adult-oriented film and prompting discussions on the normalization of violence in media.

A central aspect of Deadpool's narrative is its deliberate use of swearing to enhance realism and authenticity in character interactions. The film portrays swearing as a natural aspect of human communication, particularly as a means of expressing strong emotions, humor, and defiance. However, the high frequency of swearing in Deadpool's dialogue raises questions about its narrative function and impact on audience reception. This study analyzed the types and motivations behind Deadpool's use of swearing, analyzing how it contributes to his character development, comedic appeal, and broader social commentary. By exploring these aspects, this research aims to provide a deeper understanding of the linguistic and psychological functions of swearing in cinematic storytelling.

1.3. Limitations

This study focuses on analyzing the phenomenon of swearing as expressed by Wilson, the main character in Deadpool (2016). The scope of analysis is restricted to the swearing present in his dialogue, excluding instances of swearing

used by other characters. The study analyzed the context of swearing based solely on situations depicted in the film, without considering external factors such as interviews with the scriptwriter or director.

1.4. Research Problem

From those explanations, the research questions can be concluded as follows:

1. What types of swearing are uttered by the main character in the movie Deadpool (2016)?

2. What motivates the main character to swear in the movie Deadpool (2016)?

1.5. Research Objectives

The aims of this research are as follows,

1. To identify and describe the types of swear words used by the main character in Deadpool (2016),

2. To reveal the motivation of the main character to use swear words in Deadpool (2016).

1.6. Significance of the Study

This research is expected to make a significant theoretical and practical contribution.

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

Understanding the various types of swearing and the motivations behind its use by the main character in Deadpool (2016) can significantly contribute to sociolinguistic theory, particularly in the context of film. Swearing and sociolinguistic expressions are closely interconnected; therefore, this study

is expected to provide valuable insights, particularly regarding the role of swearing in media within the field of sociolinguistics.

1.6.2 **Practical Significance**

Particularly, this study is helpful for:

a. For the English Language Education Department

This study offers practical insights for the English Language Education Department by examining the types and motivations behind swearing used by the main character in a film. The findings can help prospective English teachers understand the use of swearing in the media, supporting more effective and contextualized teaching of sociolinguistics and discourse analysis.

b. For Further Researcher

This research is expected to serve as empirical evidence for future studies on the analysis of swearing types and the motivations behind the use of swearing by main characters in film media.