Analysis of the Use of Swear Words in Mobile Legends: Mic Check Videos

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Abstract:

Swear words unconsciously emerge when a person expresses intense emotional feelings. The use of swear words is not only limited to anger or conflict situations but also extends to everyday communication. Swear words are also often used within the scope of family, friends, couples, and within the community, especially the gamer community. This study aims to determine the types of swear words based on the functions and contexts by Mobile Legend players in Team Liquid ID's Mic Check video on YouTube by using a descriptive qualitative approach and classifying using theories of Ljung (2011). The researcher found five types out of six types of swearing. Adverbial/adjective intensifier is the type of swear word with the highest frequency of use. Each type of swear word found has its own function depending on the context in which it is used. Other results also show that players most often use swear words when they feel cornered by the enemy and when approaching the seconds of victory.

Keywords: swearing; digital communities; online mobile games; mobile legends

Abstrak:

Kata-kata umpatan secara tidak sadar muncul ketika seseorang mengekspresikan perasaan emosional yang intens. Penggunaan kata umpatan tidak hanya terbatas pada situasi kemarahan atau konflik, namun juga meluas pada komunikasi sehari-hari. Kata umpatan juga sering digunakan dalam lingkup keluarga, teman, pasangan, dan di dalam komunitas, khususnya komunitas gamer. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui jenis-jenis kata umpatan berdasarkan fungsi dan konteks yang digunakan oleh pemain Mobile Legend dalam video Mic Check milik Team Liquid ID di YouTube dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dan mengklasifikasikannya menggunakan teori Ljung (2011). Peneliti menemukan lima jenis dari enam jenis umpatan. Penguat kata keterangan/adjektiva merupakan jenis kata umpatan dengan frekuensi penggunaan tertinggi. Setiap jenis kata umpatan yang ditemukan memiliki fungsi masing-masing tergantung konteks penggunaannya. Hasil lain juga menunjukkan bahwa pemain paling sering menggunakan kata umpatan ketika mereka merasa terpojok oleh musuh dan ketika mendekati detik-detik kemenangan.

Kata kunci: umpatan; komunitas digital; permainan mobile online; mobile legends

INTRODUCTION

Humans convey their thoughts by interacting or communicating. There are many ways to express human thoughts, and one of them is by producing swear words. Using swear words can be another alternative to convey our thoughts. This is supported by Pinker (2007) who states that swear words are one of the most efficient ways to release or express anger or frustration in difficult situations. Swear words are considered bad words, so many people avoid using them. However, not everyone agrees with that. Besides being used to express negative things, swear words are also used to express something positive.

Swear words are also commonly used in a community. Using swear words in communication reflects emotional expression and serves as a tool in shaping identity and social dynamics within a particular community. Language-based communication, both in online and face-to-face contexts, often reflects the social norms, power structures, and social control mechanisms that exist within the community (Holmes, 2013). In addition, swearing can also act as a social medium, helping to break down formal boundaries and create a sense of camaraderie among group members. A study by Daly et al., (2004), who recorded reciprocal conversations between coworkers who had been divided into different work teams for 35 hours in a new factory in New Zealand. As a result, when only their team members were present, swear words were used more frequently than when other team members were present. This suggests that swear words are associated with closeness and feeling comfortable in the group. This is particularly evident in environments that often involve intense emotions, such as sports teams, military units, or online gaming communities, where using swear words can increase group cohesion and strengthen collective identity.

In digital communication, the use of swear words, especially in the context of online communities, has become an interesting phenomenon to study. Swear words are often used in daily conversation on digital media to express frustration and pleasure or strengthen community members' solidarity. The expression of swear words is more open in digital media than in traditional media, encouraging more spontaneous and uncontrolled communication. People can use swear words to make jokes, enhance interactive experiences, and generate standard linguistic codes that distinguish groups from strangers. In digital discussions, swearing can also be used as a means of social criticism or as a protest against authority. In this context, swearing becomes part of

everyday language that allows users to take part in online discussions emotionally and personally, often leading to forming communities among the platform's users. Kurniawanti & Damanhuri (2022) in their work entitled "Female English Swearing on WhatsApp Communications: A Sociolinguistics perspective" concerns the type and functions of the use of swear words by women on WhatsApp. This study utilizes the Ljung and Vingerhoets & Bylsma theories. In this study, the researcher obtained data from conducting observations through WhatsApp stories of written speech and virtual interviews. The researcher found four types of swear words, namely religious themes, scatological themes, sexual activity themes, and mother/family themes. The researcher also found two different functions depending on the context of the speech: intra-individual and inter-individual. Positive and negative emotions trigger these functions. The researcher concluded that in this study, most women use swear words triggered by negative emotions.

Moen & Ahsan (2023) in their work entitled "Profanity Words Used in Online Mobile Games Among Young Adults During Covid 19" concerns the exploration of profanity words used in an online mobile game, to find out why the profanity words are used and see the extent to which online mobile games are involved as the cause of the profanity words. In this study, the researcher collected data through semi-structured interviews. From the data collected, the researcher found that the respondents considered words that contain elements of animal names, family, religion, nationality, and derogatory terms as profanity. The researcher also concluded that profanity is influenced by how the game works.

Habibillah & Sagala (2022) in their work entitled "Unpacking Taboo Words in Game Chats: A Content Analysis of MLBB Games" concerns the types of taboo words in MLBB game chats. Qualitative content analysis was used in this study. The researcher collected data in this study by interviewing three MLBB game players and collecting screenshots layer captures of their chat comments. The researcher found that not all MLBB players use these taboo words, although one player uses them the most. Based on the data found by researchers, the most frequently used taboo word category is vulgar terms, at 32 words or 40% of the total. The researcher also found that the factors that influence the players to use taboo words in the chat column of the game are to attract attention, insult

teammates or enemies, and provoke opponents to make the game more exciting. It makes the players feel relieved and happy because they have vented their emotions in the game.

Research on using swear words in mobile games often focuses on text-based communication/written messages and interviews. The research review above shows that swear words are common in mobile games, especially those in the battle game genre. However, there is no research on using swear words in real-time communication, especially on platforms like YouTube that allow players to interact directly. By analyzing the swearing words used by players of online multiplayer games, researchers hope that players will be more selective and more careful in using swear words because game videos are uploaded on YouTube so that everyone can see, especially young children who are not old enough to understand what is good and bad.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Swearing Words as a Communication Tool that Strengthens Social Relationships

Swearing can act as a social tool, facilitating relationships among people who share common experiences and frustrations. The function of swearing goes far beyond simply expressing negative emotions. Swearing is used in many communities to strengthen social bonds. Swearing can serve as a mark of familiarity in certain social settings, where swear words reflect individuals' comfort level. Swearing is used in this situation to indicate that the communicative actors feel familiar and confident enough to go beyond the norms of politeness. This idea is also supported by Stapleton et al. (2022) research shows that swearing often strengthens social bonds, particularly within groups that have known each other for a long time or have close relationships. In this way, swearing can serve to establish solidarity and strengthen social cohesion within a specific community.

Swearing Words as Language in Digital Communities

Swearing is frequently involved in everyday exchanges in social networks, such as forums, social networking sites and online games. Digital communities present a particular communication dynamic, where linguistic norms are often more flexible than face-to-face communication. In digital communities, anonymity frequently leads people to use difficult words. According to Vingerhoets et al. (2013), swearing is not always perceived negatively in digital environments but rather as a legitimate and often requested form of personal expression in online interactions. In online gaming communities, swearing can be used to

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demonstrate the intensity of the gaming experience or to express frustration without seeking to offend opponents or other players.

Swear words often involve performative elements that reinforce or defuse social tensions. For example, in gaming communities, swear words in games frequently reflect emotions, frustrations, or even interpersonal strategies between players. In this context, the language used, including swear words, often reflects the social dynamics that occur during the game. Players may use harsh words as a way to express anger or frustration when strategies do not go as planned or when faced with poor performance from teammates or opponents. In addition, swear words in these games can also serve as a form of group identity reinforcement or as a tool to negotiate social position within the team (Herring, 2012). Thus, understanding the use of swear words in mobile gaming provides insight into individual behavior and broader social dynamics within the gaming community.

Swearing Words as a Communication Tool for Humor and Familiarity

Swearing plays an essential role in creating humor and reinforcing intimacy between people. According to Ljung (2011), humor frequently uses swearing to break with formality and create a more relaxed atmosphere. Swearing is used in informal online community interactions, such as gaming environments or chat groups, to provide an element of humor and strengthen social bonds between community members. Swearing is generally not perceived as offensive in these situations but rather as a means of expressing familiarity and camaraderie. For example, in multiplayer games, swearing uttered in a joking tone or accompanied by laughter can strengthen bonds between players while highlighting that interaction remains within the boundaries of play and friendship (Vingerhoets et al., 2013).

RESEARCH METHODS

The subject of this research is studied using a descriptive qualitative approach. The descriptive data research method is the most suitable for evaluating the data, and it is conceivable to use this data, as it is expected to provide a complete picture of swearing. According to Hancock (1998), qualitative research aims to explain social phenomena. The approach is well used because no quantities are to be taken, and the facts are analyzed in depth. A qualitative method looks at the characteristics of the techniques utilized in the

data to determine why certain speakers—especially human ones—used certain circumstances (Cholidah & Damanhuri, 2017). Therefore, the descriptive qualitative method is appropriate for analyzing "Analysis of the Use of Swear Words in Mobile Legends: Mic Check Videos."

The subjects of this study were Mobile Legends players in a group called Team Liquid ID. Researchers chose Mobile Legends players because Mobile Legends itself is one of the most popular mobile battle games with a very large player base and often involves intense verbal interactions between players. The researcher chose to use Team Liquid ID's video content during Mic Check because it covers real-time game situations and often triggers players' emotions, so it has the potential to display the use of swear words in various functions, types, and contexts. The researcher used the Team Liquid ID Mic Check video content uploaded on YouTube on October 7th, September 28th, September 21st, September 20th, and September 14th, 2024.

In collecting data, the researcher uses non-participatory observation by recording the words of Mobile Legends players that contain swear words and then marking and translating them into English. Then, the researcher will identify the collected data by classifying them into eight types of swear words based on the function according to Ljung (2011). After being classified, the researcher will analyze the context of the swear words.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Using Ljung's theory, a number of utterances have been identified as types of swear words based on their functions.

Table 1. Classification of the Types of Swear Words in the Videos

No.	Type of Swear Words	Frequency
1.	Expletive Interjection	8
2.	Curse	6
3.	Unfriendly Suggestion	3
4.	Adverbial/Adjective Intensifier	9
5.	Adjective of Dislike	0
6.	Anaphoric Epithet	8
	Total	**34**

The researcher found five out of six types of swear words from two main categories: stand-alone swear words and slot-filler swear words. Stand-alone swear words are divided into three sub-categories: The expletive interjection type, the curse type, and the unfriendly suggestion type. Slot-filler swear words are also divided into three sub-categories: The adverbial/adjective intensifier type, the adjective of dislike type, and the anaphoric epithet type.

Expletive Interjection

- **Data 1**

*"**Anjing!** Gak mati **cok**"* (**Bitch!** He's still alive, **fuck**)

The swear word in data 1 expresses the speaker's surprise when he and his teammates attack several enemies simultaneously. It turns out that the enemy is stronger than imagined. So, the speaker is surprised and immediately tells the enemy's condition to his other teammates.

- **Data 2**

*"**Sialan!** Mati gua"* (**Shit!** I am killed)

The swear word in data 2 expresses the speaker's frustration when he confidently dueled with one of the enemies, only to lose because his character was killed before his ultimate recharged.

Curse

- **Data 3**

*"Wah **anjing!**"* (Wah **bitch!**)

The swear word in data 3 expresses the speaker's anger at not being able to kill one of the enemies.

Unfriendly Suggestion

- **Data 4**

*"Kenapa **cok** orang ini?"* (What the **fuck** is wrong with this guy?)

In data 4, the speaker uses the swear word to insult the enemy. When the game was in session, one of the enemy team members kept coming forward as if challenging the speaker and his teammates, even though the speaker and his teammates had retreated and the enemy team had also stopped attacking them.

Adverbial/Adjective Intensifier

"Kocak anjing!" (You are so **fucking** funny!)

The speaker uses the swear word in data 5 to strengthen the adjective "kocak." The speaker uses this swear word when one of his teammates does something funny while the game continues.

Anaphoric Epithet

- **Data 6**

"Si kontol ini!" (This **dickhead!**)

The speaker uses the swear word in data 6 to refer to the previous noun or phrase. The speaker uses this swear word when one of the enemy teams challenges the speaker with his annoying attitude.

CONCLUSION

Based on Ljung's classification, it can be concluded that in Team Liquid ID's mic check video, a total of 34 data were found with 2 main categories of swear word types, namely stand-alone type and slot-filler type. The stand-alone type is divided into 3 sub-categories: 1. Expletive interjection (8 data), 2. Curse (6 data), and 3. Unfriendly suggestion (3 data). The slot-filler type is also divided into 3 sub-categories: 1. Adverbial/Adjective intensifier (9 data), Adjective of dislike (0 data), and 5. Anaphoric epithet (8 data). From the results of this study, researchers also concluded that from the 5 videos taken as data, online mobile game players, especially mobile legends, have begun to say swear words rarely and are more careful in their utterances.

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