



Exploring Swear Words in IshowSpeed's "Bad Parenting": A Sociolinguistic Study

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Abstract:

The use of language in the digital age is increasingly diverse, reflecting the social, emotional, and cultural aspects of its speakers. In the context of social media and entertainment platforms such as YouTube, the use of swear words is often an expressive strategy that attracts the attention of viewers. The study entitled "Exploring Swear Words in IshowSpeed's "Bad Parenting": A Sociolinguistic Study" aims to identify the types and functions of swear words used by the content creator in one of his contents. This study uses a descriptive qualitative method and Jay's (2009) theory, which classifies swear words based on their type and function. The data was taken from a video transcript of one of Speed's content titled "Speed plays Bad Parenting *SCARY GAME*". The results of this study show that Speed often uses swear words as a form of emotional expression, humor, and social interaction with his audience. Based on these findings, it appears that the swear words used by Speed not only serve as an outlet for emotion, but also as a characteristic communication strategy in building social interaction with the audience in online game video content.

Keywords: swear words; sociolinguistic; digital communication; YouTube content; video game

Abstrak:

Penggunaan Bahasa dalam era digital semakin beragam, karena mencerminkan aspek sosial, emosional, dan budaya dari penuturnya. Dalam konteks media sosial dan platform hiburan seperti YouTube, penggunaan kata-kata makian sering menjadi strategi ekspresif yang menarik perhatian penonton. Penelitian yang berjudul "Exploring Swear Words in IshowSpeed's "Bad Parenting": A Sociolinguistic Study" bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi type dan fungsi swear words yang digunakan konten kreator tersebut pada salah satu kontennya. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif dan teori dari Jay (2009) yang mengklasifikasikan kata makian berdasarkan jenis dan fungsinya. Data yang diambil berdasarkan transkrip video dari salah satu konten Speed yang berjudul "Speed plays Bad Parenting *SCARY GAME*". Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa Speed sering menggunakan kata-kata makian sebagai bentuk ekspresi emosi, humor, serta interaksi sosial dengan penontonnya. Berdasarkan temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa kata makian yang digunakan Speed tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai luapan emosi, tetapi juga ciri khas strategi komunikasi dalam membangun interaksi sosial dengan audiens dalam konten video permainan daring.

Kata kunci: kata-kata umpatan; sosiolinguistik; komunikasi digital; konten youtube; permainan video



INTRODUCTION

Language not only serves as a means of communication, but also expresses feelings, thoughts and cultural identity. As said by Yule (2010) language is a complex system of communication that uses sounds or symbols to convey our feelings, ideas, thoughts, and experiences. In linguistic studies, sociolinguistics is the science that studies the interaction between language and society, and explores how social factors such as status, age, gender, and communication situations influence a person's choice of words, intonation, and style of speech. Through sociolinguistics, we understand that language use is not only formal communication, but also a social practice of meaning, including the use of expressions that are often considered deviant from the norm, such as swear words.

Sometimes certain words that are considered dirty or taboo actually have tremendous power to express emotions, build connections, or challenge social norms. Swear words are a unique form of linguistic expression. According to Bowers & Pleydell-Pearce, (2011) swear words not only the meaning, but also the sound and form of swear words can cause emotional discomfort. In linguistic studies, swear words are not only viewed from the perspective of politeness, but also have important communicative and social functions. Taboo words and swear words can serve as a means of expressing emotions ('release'), as a mechanism for strengthening solidarity within a group, and as a form of entertainment (Wardhaugh, 2010). Therefore, swear words are a complex linguistic phenomenon, which, although on the one hand violate the norms of politeness, on the other hand are an integral part of human communication.

In the ever-improving digital media, the use of language has found a new space. The use of swear words is increasingly found in various media, including digital entertainment content. One YouTuber who is interesting to study is IshowSpeed or known by nickname Speed, a popular game streamer from America who has more than 3 million YouTube subscribers. Speed is known for his expressive and spontaneous communication style, which is often interspersed with the use of swear words in his content. Swear words have negative connotations, but in certain situations they can also strengthen social bonds or indicate a particular identity. For some people, the use of swear words may create a negative impression. However, for viewers, it actually adds an element of humor and closeness



between streamers and their audience. This phenomenon demonstrates a sociolinguistic dynamic in which profanity serves not only as an expression of emotion, but also as a communication strategy that strengthens the bond between streamers and viewers.

The main reason for this research is to find out what swear words are used in the content and the function and meaning of the use of swear words in the context of digital entertainment, especially Speed's content. Although swear words are generally considered inappropriate, in reality they often increase the appeal and add to the uniqueness of a content creator. This analysis will explain how swear words are used not only as expressions of anger, but also as rhetorical devices, means of entertainment, and expressions of identity.

This study refers to Wardhaugh (2010) view that swear words are part of the taboo language phenomenon, which has certain social functions, such as expressing emotions, strengthening group solidarity, and affirming social identity. Jay (2009) study on the use of swear words in public discourse and Ljung (2011) study on the variation and function of swear words show that swear words are not only a violation of norms but also a complex means of communication.

There are several previous studies that examine the same topic. The first research conducted by (Afrilya et al., 2021) entitled "An Analysis Types and Function of Swear Words Used in PewDiePie's Video" analyzed the types and functions of swear words used by PewDiePie in one of his videos entitled "This is Bad." Using Wardhaugh's theory and qualitative descriptive methods, this study found six types of swear words, namely excretion, death, body function terms, religious matters, mother-in-law, and sex terms. The main function of using these swear words is to express feelings such as hatred, anger, and contempt towards objects or subjects while playing games. Meanwhile, research conducted by (Prayuda et al., 2019) entitled "The Analysis of Swear Words Used by the Characters in Moonlight" examined the types and functions of swear words used by the characters in the film Moonlight. The results of this study indicate that swear words are not only used as expressions of anger or frustration, but also have other functions, such as showing familiarity, emphasizing emotions, and building characterization in films.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Swear Words

Swear words can be defined as words or expressions that are considered rude in a particular language or culture. Swear words are often used to express negative emotions such as anger, surprise, and contempt, but they can also have positive meanings depending on the context and how they are used. Although considered rude, swear words also have social and psychological functions, such as releasing emotions or strengthening social relationships in certain contexts. According to Timothy & Janschewitz (2008) “Swearing is a form of language taboo that functions to express emotion and establish social boundaries. It can both harm and heal, depending on context.”

Jay said (2009), swear words are divided into nine categories, those are sexual reference, profanity or blasphemy, scatological and disgusting object, animal names, ethnic-racial-gender slurs, physical or social deviations, ancestral allusion, substandard vulgar terms, offensive slang. This classification can help to understand the types and functions of swear words in the context of their use.

Types of Swear Words

Sexual reference: Words related to sexual activity, such as genital organs or reproductive organs, which are considered vulgar and taboo because they represent the realm of morality and decency.

Profanity or blasphemy: These words are terms, concepts, or symbols related to religion that have negative connotations.

Scatological and disgusting object: These words refer to something disgusting or inappropriate because it is related to bodily excretion or waste.

Animal names: Words that use animal names as a form of insult or ridicule. Animal names are used because of their characteristics or image, which are considered disgusting and negative.

Ethnic-racial-gender slurs: words used to attack someone’s identity based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation.

Physical or social deviations: Words that refer to physical disabilities or deviant social behavior.

Ancestral allusion: Words used to refer to or insult ancestors or family members. This is considered taboo because it is disrespectful to the honor of the family.



Substandard vulgar terms: Everyday swear words that are not always taboo, but are still considered inappropriate in formal situations.

Offensive slang: Swear words that are modern words or slang that contain rude, crude, and insulting meanings.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative descriptive method. This qualitative descriptive study was conducted to describe and analyze the functions and types of swear words that appear in Speed's video content. This study was chosen by considering the linguistic phenomenon of swear word usage through descriptive analysis that emphasizes context, meaning, and the social function of language. The data was taken from a video transcript of one of Speed's content titled "Speed plays Bad Parenting *SCARY GAME*". Videos that show emotional reactions such as anger, surprise, or frustration while playing games will be the main focus, as these moments tend to trigger the use of profanity. Data was collected through documentation. Researchers downloaded and watched selected videos, then transcribed Speed's utterances containing profanity.

In this study, several techniques were used for data analysis, namely: identifying swear words in the videos, classifying swear words based on their type, such as words related to sexual reference, profanity or blasphemy, scatological and disgusting object, animal names, ethnic-racial-gender slurs, physical or social deviations, ancestral allusion, substandard vulgar terms, offensive slang, with reference to Jay's theory (2009). Then, the researcher analyzed the function of the use of swear words. The results of the analysis will be presented in the form of a descriptive narrative, supported by frequency tables showing the types and functions of swear words found. In addition, video transcript excerpts will also be displayed as concrete evidence of the use of swear words by Speed.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on an analysis of one of IShowSpeed on his YouTube channel entitled "Speed plays Bad Parenting *SCARY GAME*", there are 30 types and functions of swear words according to Jay's (2009) theory.

No.	Type of Swear Words	Frequently
1.	Sexual References	0
2.	Profanity or Blasphemy	10
3.	Scatological and Disgusting Objects	1
4.	Animal Names	0
5.	Ethnic, Racial, and Gender Slurs	1
6.	Physical or Social Deviations	1
7.	Ancestral Allusions	0
8.	Substandard Vulgar Terms	17
9.	Offensive Slang	0
Total		30

Discussion

After collecting data from one of IshowSpeed's videos on YouTube, the author found 30 swear words that can be categorized according to Jays (2009). The author found 5 types of swear words from the 9 types mentioned by Jays (2009). From the overall data, the substandard vulgar type was used most frequently, 17 times, followed by profanity or blasphemy times 10 times. Meanwhile, other types such as ethnic, racial, and gender slurs, physical or social deviations, and scatological and disgusting objects appeared 1 time.

Substandard Vulgar Terms

Data 1

"Damn, why he talking to me like that" (1.32)

From data 1, the word "Damn" Included in the category of vulgar substandard terms because it is used to express discomfort in the context of in-game conversations. In this context, the gamer is portrayed as a child. Then, when he is arguing with his father in the game, his father yells and says the harsh words, "Hey little shit, get back to your room!". This sentence mimics the player's surprise and spontaneous response, "Damn, why is he talking to me like that?". The use of this sentence is not to insult someone directly but to react to a situation that has just happened to a character in the video game being played.

Ethnic, Racial, and Gender Slurs

Data 2

"Bitch, you just hit my mom" (18.56)

In this data, "bitch" is classified as an ethnic, racial, and gender slur, which is an insult against gender because it specifically refers to women with derogatory,

aggressive, and judgmental connotations. In this context, the word “bitch” is used as a form of protest against the violence that occurs in the game.

Profanity or Blasphemy #

Data 3

“You ugly you look like **goddamn**” (1.40)

In the data, the word “goddamn” is included in the Profanity or Blasphemy category. This word is a curse word related to religious elements or symbols. The word “goddamn” is considered inappropriate because it associates God's name with insults. In this context, the sentence appears as an emotional response in a scene of conflict between a father and son that shows violence in the game.

Physical or Social Deviations

Data 4

“Hell, no the doll is **crazy**” (15.44)

In the fourth piece of data, the word “crazy,” which falls under the category of Physical or Social Deviations. This word is used to describe conditions or behaviors that are considered deviant from social norms, irrational, or beyond the bounds of sanity. The word “crazy” refers to abnormal mental conditions or behaviors. The word “crazy” is not merely descriptive, but serves as an evaluative judgment of the object (doll) that exhibits abnormal behavior. Its use in the sentence is a reaction to a scary, suspicious, and unreasonable situation in the game.

Scatological and Disgusting Objects

Data 5

“What the hell, what is the little **ass** kid doing” (16.42)

This sentence contains the word “ass,” which is classified as a Scatological and Disgusting Object. The word “ass” is a swear word that refers to a part of the body that is considered disgusting or related to human excretion. This word is a taboo physical function that is often included in this category because it is considered crude, vulgar, and inappropriate. In the context of the game, the gamer character transforms into a child and is trying to find his parents. When he encounters small dolls that annoy him and hinder his mission, he utters this sentence. Its use is a spontaneous reaction to the dolls that annoy and hinder the player's journey in the game.



CONCLUSION(S)

Based on the analysis of swear words in the Speed's video using Jay's (2009) theory of swear words, which divides them into nine categories, namely sexual references, profanity or blasphemy, scatological and disgusting objects, animal names, ethnic-racial-gender slurs, physical or social deviations, ancestral allusions, substandard vulgar terms, and offensive slang. The analysis found five categories: substandard vulgar terms (17 data), profanity or blasphemy (10 data), scatological and disgusting objects (1 data), ethnic, racial, and gender slurs, and physical or social deviations (1 data). These five categories show that the use of swear words by YouTuber IShowSpeed is dominated by emotional, spontaneous, and expressive utterances.

The use of swear words is not intended to insult or offend, but rather as a form of emotional release, a humorous strategy, and a way to build rapport between viewers. Through the expressive choice of words used by Speed, this creates an entertaining and authentic atmosphere that sets her apart from other gamers. The category of substandard vulgar terms such as "damn" is a form of discomfort or surprise, while the word 'bitch' in the category of ethnic, racial, and gender slurs has a more specific meaning because it attacks a particular gender. The word "goddamn" in the category of profanity or blasphemy shows the involvement of religious matters that are considered taboo. The category of physical or social deviation through the word "crazy" is used to give a negative assessment of abnormal objects or conditions. Meanwhile, the word "ass" as part of scatological and disgusting objects shows an expressive function that emphasizes the player's annoyance or dislike of certain objects in the game.

In addition, the swear words used by Speed not only serve as a means of expressing emotions, but also as a unique communication strategy in building social interaction with the audience in online game content. Thus, swear words in this context emerges as part of communication influenced by the situation and the role of the character in the game.



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