

## AN ANALYSIS OF TABOO WORDS IN THE MOVIE 'SCORSESE CASINO'

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### Abstract

*In social interactions, there are still many people who use taboo words to mock and even berate others. It makes communication not good, so that it can cause conflict between each other. In this study we will discuss about the taboo words used by the characters in the Scorsese's Casino film. The purpose of this study was to find out the types of taboo words contained in Scorsese's Casino Movie, to eliminate the taboo words and the reasons why these taboo words were spoken. (2006). This study used descriptive qualitative method. The data in this study is from Film Casino which contains the translation of taboo words and the reasons why taboo words are spoken. Data were collected in the form of sentences containing taboo words. There are 68 data found in this study, here are the results of the analysis. There are four types of taboo words found in Scorsese's Casino, namely epithets, profanity, vulgarity, and obscenity. There are four reasons why taboo words are spoken which are to draw attention to oneself, to show contempt, to be provocative. Based on the results above, it can be seen that most of the characters in Scorsese's Casino use epithets and obscenity to insult, these two types of words are the most influential words. While the reason why taboo words are spoken is dominantly to show contempt. So this research is useful for the community so that people can take better care of their words in communicating by using better words.*

**Keywords:** Sociolinguistic, Taboo Words, Scorsese Casino Movie.

## INTRODUCTION

Untung Yuwono (2005), the notion of language is a communication tool owned by humans in the form of a sound symbol system that comes from human speech or mouth. Some people may like to have a strong influence in using their state of mind, for example when they are happy, sad, or angry and sometimes use certain types of words which are considered bad language which is very inappropriate to use. One way to communicate a trend or describe something is to say taboo words.

Matthews (1997) states that taboos are words that are known to speakers, but whose use is avoided in some or all forms or contexts in speech for reasons of religion, propriety, politeness, and so on. As stated by Sanjaya (2018), taboo words in the form of swearing are not articulated to convey only love and emotional tendencies but are also articulated to communicate good characters, similarities, between networks.

The presence of taboo words can be seen from various sources, for example on TV shows, song lyrics and even in movies. The emergence of different taboo words in these sources is due to the way some groups accept that the use of taboo words is an appropriate way to communicate clear tendencies and feelings, especially through swearing. Although movie is a type of fiction, it can actually be said to be a depiction of our everyday reality. According to Michael Rabiger (2009), film is an audio-visual medium to entertain and attract the attention of the audience, so that it can make the audience think more deeply. Film is an interesting medium for people to describe and calculate the circumstances of life. Movies have types like list classes, satire, heart touching performances, dramatization, action, movement and many others. In some films, taboo words are used to support the storyline. Because if taboo words are spoken spontaneously, there are also those that can invite laughter. In this paper, because in the film, there are a lot of taboo words in different types used by the characters.

For example :

### a) Epithets

Epithets are slur expressions for instance. Usually, those refer to race, ethnicity, gender, or sexuality, but they can also indicate appearance, disability, and another characteristic.

The following is an example of epithets.

“Been beating the customers ? Huh, **jag-off?** Hit me.”

(Source : Scorsese Casino)

The taboo words is presented when Nicky comes to the casino at midnight he asks for money about 50.000. Billy tells Nicky that Ace will give him 10.000 but Nicky insist on 50.000. he is waiting for the money while playing poker.

### b) Profanity

Profanity refers to religious cursing. By using a word, holy or sacred, it means using a word profanity. The example of profanity : Jesus Christ, god-damn etc.

The following is an example of profanity :

“Where is he ? **Goddamn**, i want that jew bastard killed!”

(Source : Scorsese Casino)

The taboo word is presented when Ginger comes to Nicky’s restaurant. She looks for him and asks him to kill Ace, her husband.

c) Vulgarity

Vulgarity is rude expressions which the speaker uses words related to part of intimate body function of excretory.

The following is the example of vulgarity:

“He is **such a prick!** He had some guys from the hotel to beat him.

(Source : Scorsese Casino)

The taboo word is presented when Ginger is grumbling in front of Nicky. She tells him that Ace’s people just hit Lester.

d) Obscenity

Obscenity is crude expression where the speaker tends to use words related to sexual activities or sexual function.

The following is the example of obscenity :

”Yeah enjoy. Have a good time. Choke on it, **motherfucker**”

(Source : Scorsese Casino)

The taboo word is presented when the burger that has been spit on given to the securities. Dominick comes to them friendly brings the burger and gives it to them. The securities are happy. They say thanks to Dominick the go.

As a picture of a society and its culture, film can be a very influential medium to change people's way of thinking. Analysis of taboo words found in films can be a source of information on how they can affect communication. Moreover, the analysis of taboo words at Scorsese Casino has never been done before.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### 1) Sociolinguistics

Sociolinguistics is a branch of linguistics that takes language as an object of study, in a way that is usually distinguished from how syntax, semantics, morphology, and phonology handle it. It is a field that analysis language as part of social property. The study explores the functions and the varieties of language, attitudes of people towards language use and users. Some linguist used term of sociolinguistics as a study about relation between language and society in purpose to make a better understanding about the stucture of language and how a language is functioned in communication (Wardhaugh, 1986 : 12).

Language can be used to express feelings and information to other people. By using the language, other people will understand what we mean and we are talking about. Everyone use different language variation to communication.

Language and communication is related to language variation. According to Wardhaugh (2006;135), language variation is one way of characterizing in certain variations is to say that speakers of particular language sometimes speak in different dialect of that language.

Holmes (2001:73) states that language variation is linguistics form, which is based on social circumtances and included vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation of dialet, and spelling are included in different language. Thus, language variation is determined by social itself, their background, status,

education, and degree of formality of a situation where the language is used. It means that there is no language without having variation. All language in this world are involved in a great deal of variation. Because of the variation, the speaker of the language speaks differently. The variation offers the speakers a choice of ways of expression in different ways.

## 2) Taboo Words

Jay (1992 : 4) stated that a taboo is used to control or inhibit certain behavior, thought, or speech. Different cultures use taboos to control individuals within the group in order to preserve social order. The power or the strength of taboo is relative to the power of controlling group to sanction or to punish the perpetrator. The function of the taboo is to prohibit the behavior of the speaker and preserve social cohesion. The focus of taboo topic in society is on the speaker's behavior.

Taboo words occur in most of all language. Moreover, using taboo words could lead to punishment or public shame. Many people will never employ words of this type and most of them will only use them in restricted set of situations. Taboo words can be defined as terms that are forbidden to be uttered since they are used to offend and hurt people. In this line, Allan and Burridge ( 2006 : 237-238 ) states that :

“A taboo word in today's English is avoided-that is to say, censored out of use on a particular occasion-not (unless one is a child) because any fear that physical harm may be fall either on the speaker or the audience, but less the speaker loses face by offending the sensibilities of the audience”.

Wijana and Rohmadi (2008 : 115-130) stated that taboo can be defined into formal aspect and reference. Taboo as a formal aspect form is categorized into three types : taboo in words, taboo in phrase (words group), and taboo in clause. Next, Wijana and Rohmadi (2008 : 119-124 ) define taboo as a reference form is categorized into : situation, animal, things, body anatomy, relationship, spirit, activity, profession and exclamation. In fact, there are many types of taboo words, which is related to death, religion, disease, race, sex, etc.

Wardough (1986) expressed that taboo is the disallowance or evasion in any general society of conduct accepted to be unsafe to its people in that it would cause them uneasiness, humiliation, or disgrace.

Battistella (2005) said taboo word is a word that used by people to express their feeling in certain circumstance.

## 3) Types of Taboo Words

Taboo words in its usage, refer to several uses of offensive speech. Technically, speaking taboo words is usually wishing harm on a mental of person.

For the theory of types of taboo words, this research will use the theory proposed by Battistella (2005) they are : epithets, profanity, vulgarity, and obscenity.

1. Epithets are slur expression, an expressions contains slur expressions such as racial, ethnic, appearance, disability, and other characteristics. Epithets are burst of emotional expression. It is also habitual in nature, for example, you say a dirty words when your-self hurt. Gender and sexuality also include epithets. Example of epithets bitch, whore, wop dwarf, retard, and gimp.
2. Profanity refers to religious cursing. By using a word, holy or sacred, it means using a word profanity. Saying a sacred word such as Jesus Christ and goddam- it as an expression of annoyance

or surprise. The example of profanity: Jesus Christ, god-damn, etc.

3. Vulgarity is an expression in which the speaker uses words related to the part of the intimate body function of excretory. According to Jay (1992), vulgarity is the language of the common people “people in the street”, under-educated or lower class. The example of vulgarity is asshole, snot, cock, shit, kiss my ass, etc.

Obscenity is an expression where the speaker tends to use words related to sexual activities or sexual function. Obscenity is considered as the most offensive type and lacks morality. It is rarely or even prohibited used in public. The example of obscenity is fuck, cocksucker, motherfucker, etc.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this research, the research will utilize a design of descriptive qualitative method which is a method for research that endeavors to depict and interpret the articles as per reality. The descriptive method is implemented because the data analysis is presented descriptively. According to Sugiono (2017), there are three activities to analyze qualitative descriptive data in research. These activities are data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. As shown by the theory above, the researcher formed a data analysis technique by making a list of every word that is a taboo word, then classified into categories according to the type of taboo words and the reasons are spoken, and the last one is a conclusion.

In this study, the source of the data in this study was taken from the film entitled Scorsese Casino. The film was released in Las Vegas in the United States in 1995. The data of this research are in the form of words, phrases, clauses or sentences contained in the dialogues of the actors of the Scorsese Casino Movie.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Types of Taboo Words

The arrangement of taboo words into classifications is expected to permit individuals to comprehend the distinctive type of implying that the taboo words utilize. Not every one of the taboo words are articulated to show the displeasure articulation. There should be the reason behind why the taboo words are uttered in the conversation.

A portion of the articulations can be cross-arranged and it is utilized in more than one way. To have the option to comprehend the types of the taboo words, one needs to check out the whole sentence and the setting to perceive how the words are utilized. Taboo words are worked as the provocative stamping, however it is likewise giving another capacity which will be dissected.

**Table 4.1 The data distribution of types of taboo words**

No.	Types of Taboo Words	Quantity	Frequency
1.	Epithets	30	44,1 %
2.	Profanity	3	4,4 %

3.	Vulgarity	13	19,1 %
4.	Obscenity	22	32,4 %
	<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>100 %</b>

There are 68 data that were found by the researcher in Scorsese’s Casino Movie. Based on the analysis there are four types of taboo words were found they are epithets appears 30 times, obscenity appears 22 times, profanity appears 3 times and vulgarity 13 times

**a. Epithets**

Epithets are slur expressions for instance. Usually, those refer to race, ethnicity, gender, or sexuality, but they can also indicate appearance, disability, and another characteristics.

**010/EPT/51:30**

Cowboy : You know who you’re fuckin with?! Huh? Do you?!

Security : Now move along.

Cowboy : You’re fucking faggot! Do you know who you’re fuckin’ with ?

In the movie, Ace asks the securities to drive out the gambler, the cowboy. The securities hold his hand and he tries to break away. They pulled him out of the casino using his head. The cowboy is angry and berated. The word *you fucking faggot* means a damned a male homosexual. The word refers to epithets which the character uses insulting and contemptuous that refers to sexuality. That's why the word belongs to the epithet type because Ace says or calls the man with the word “*fucking faggot.*”

**b. Profanity**

Profanity refers to religious cursing. By using a word, holy or sacred, it means using a words profanity. The example of profanity: Jesus Christ, god-damn etc.

**008/PRF/50:39**

Ace : I don’t give a shit who he’s connected to. Tell him to take his fuckin’ feet off the table. What’s he think this is, a goddamn sawdust joint?

Sherbert : Okey, Sir!

In this movie, Ace watches the gamblers in the casino, he looks one of the gambler put his feet on the table, he seems don’t like the behavior then he asks his manager to tell the gambler to take his feet of the table. A *goddamned* means to ask God to condemn someone forever in hell. The word refers to profanity which Ace utters religious word “goddamned”. By saying religious or sacred words it means using a profanity.

### **c. Vulgarity**

Vulgarity is rude expressions which the speaker uses words related to part of intimate body function of excretory.

#### **009VGR/50:53**

Sherbert : Fuckin's asshole won't budge.

Ace : Call the security!

In the movie, Billy comes to the gambler who put his feet on the table and asks him nicely to take his feet on the table but the gambler don't want, he refuses in calmly way. Billy comes back to Ace and tell him. The word belongs to the type of vulgarity because in the context Billy immediately met a gambler who put his feet on the table, namely a cowboy and told him to put it down.

### **d. Obscenity**

Obscenity is crude expression where the speaker tends to use word related to sexual activities or sexual function.

#### **012/OBC/52:44**

Nicky : You took your boots off ? You put your feet on the table. You shit kicking, stinky, horse-manure-smelling' motherfucker you! You fuck me up over there, i'll stick you in a hole in the fuckin' desert! You understand? Go over and apologize! Cowboy : Nicky, I'm sorry

In the movie, Nicky is getting angry to the cowboy because the cowboy insult his friend, Ace and made mess in Casino. So that he beats and kicks the cowboy and asks him to go back to the casino to apologize to Ace. The word is included in the obscenity type because it is something that refers to someone who is slovenly and impolite. And in this scene you horse dung bastard refers to a coward and despicable or despicable person. The word refers to obscene words in which Nicky uses abusive expressions related to sexual activity to insult.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH**

### ***Conclusion***

Based on the findings and discussion in Chapter IV, some conclusion can be formulated as follows.

There are four types of taboo words namely epithets, profanity, vulgarity and obscenity which appear in Scorsese Casino movie. The highest frequency of the types of taboo words is epithets. Epithets appears 30 times out of 68 total data. The lowest frequency is profanity appears only 3 times out of 68 data. The reason why epithet always appear in the conversation because epithets is simple loud. It is uttered serving non-corrective purpose (as with the targeted use) but mainly serving to reduce the anger level of the speaker.

The least frequently used taboo words is profanity which is based on a religious distinction. Therefore it is not an affective way to express feelings or to show disrespect towards people because it is a sensitive topic.

### **Suggestions**

Based on the conclusion above, some suggestions can be stated as follows.

1. For English Department students, in order to understand the types and function of taboo words, the first thing is to pay a closer attention in categorizing the types and functions of taboo words because not all taboo words can only be categorized one type at a time. As in the example described above, in one sentence they may say 2 different taboo words (at the beginning and at the end of the sentence) so that in the same scene there are 2 types of taboo words.
2. For further linguistic researchers who have the same topic, this research is focused on identifying the types of taboo words and describing the function of taboo words. There are several issues that need to be analyzed such as the types of taboo words and the reasons why taboo words are spoken. For similar researchers, it can provide a better understanding and additional information about the same topic.
3. To the society, this researcher provides the knowledge to understand the use of taboo words especially in the types and function of taboo words. Taboo words are categorized as bad language and it will impact on the listeners in certain way, but not all taboo words have the same meaning, it has to be analyzed based on the context of the sentence in order to understand the exact meaning.

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