

Chapter 1: Introduction

The first chapter aimed at explaining the reasons why this research was important to be conducted. It dealt with some particular sections such as background of the research, research questions, objectives of the research, significance of the research designed to provide positive benefits for the readers and followed by scope of the research.

Background of Research

The existence of culture indeed plays an important role in influencing the way how people use a language. This is due to an idea that culture does not only address some particular items such as music, literature, or the diversity of arts, but it also comes up to society as a set of rules that regulates the entire aspects of life with regard to behavior, thought, belief and in particular the language usage. As a result, it can be said that language is a medium for people to create their social identity and it represents to what culture they belong to. This is in consonance with the statement of Wardhaugh (2010) that “the culture of a people finds reflection in the language they employ” (p. 230). Hence, the previous explanation significantly brings a proper understanding to majority of the people that language is able to be one of the reflections of culture in society.

Speaking about the relationship between language and culture, taboo language is also considered as something that portrays people’s culture. To prove the statement, what happened in South Africa may become one of the relevant examples. Taking this into consideration, those people who live in that country, especially women, believe that speaking their husband name directly as well as

the father in law is something that they should avoid of. When those women keep doing so, they will get punishments in accordance with the rules applied in that country. By viewing this, the statement made by Fromkin (2001) is highly supportive in which he stated that,

In all societies certain acts or behaviors are frowned on, forbidden, or considered taboo. The words or expressions referring to these taboo acts are then also avoided or considered “dirty.” Language itself cannot be obscene or clean; the rejection of specific words linguistic expressions only reflects the culture of a given society (p. 289).

In connection with Fromkin’s theory, it can simply be understood that the use of taboo language/words is strongly affected by the culture itself. Due to the existence of this cultural influence, an important matter has always been displayed in society that men are portrayed as individuals who possess discourteous trait. As a result, such trait thereby enables them to use any form of taboo words compared to women. One of the masterpieces reflecting about this matter comes from Chambers and Trudgill (1998) who asserted that society views bad language as a positive thing and compatible for men in which taboo words take a role as one of its classifications. Because women are regarded as individuals who tend to use super polite forms or at least polite forms in the conversation, they are never expected to employ taboo words (Coats, 2004). As a consequence, when women employ taboo words in particular with the high frequency, it will negatively influence their life. Stapleton as cited in Johnova (2011) said that “a woman who

uses ‘bad language’ is likely to invite not only negative social ascriptions, but also judgments regarding her moral standing and character” (p. 26).

Since language is undergoing changed however, the inclination of using taboo words does not only refer to men, but it may seem very possible for women as well. In the twenty-first century particularly, it becomes unavoidable that the taboo words can be found in various multiform media including social media, TV shows, and movies. To be specific in the movies, one of the movies that demonstrating about the employment of taboo words is a Quentin Tarantino movie entitled *Death Proof*. This movie is chosen as the subject of the research due to the tendency of the main characters who linguistically utter certain words categorized into taboo either it is men or women characters. Speaking about taboo words used by the main characters of *Death Proof* movie, Stuntman Mike’s utterance may turn to be the relatable example in which he says “**Get ready to fly, bitch!**” in the period of time (01:37:26-01:37:29). Besides, another form of taboo words in the mentioned-movie also comes from the character named Arlene. Considering this, she generates an utterance “**Well that’s what she always says, but in actual fact, she doesn’t really have a black girl ass, she’s just got a big ass**” in the period of time (00:12:03-00:12:08).

Being detail with Arlene’s utterance, speaking about part of body is actually not a big deal for some people. Nevertheless, it should be taken into consideration that the chosen word seems to be quite vulgar and at the same time indecent. Though, there are still more appropriate words she can utilize such as bottom or perhaps butt. As contained on her utterance, Arlene prefer employing the word ass

which is according to few dictionaries, it is often defined as something that points out to men's vital organ. Jay (1992) in the book entitled *Cursing in America* then clarified that in taboo language vulgarity represents the street language and in most cases describes specific parts of human body which are sensitive enough to be uttered and heard. By viewing the explanation, the researcher can therefore take a conclusion that the appropriate type of taboo words for Arlene's utterance is none other than vulgarity.

Aside from discussing the types, the utterance of Arlene above also indicates that she is applying the word ass with an intention to insult another person which is in this case Jungle Julia who works as local DJ in Austin city. The utterance is produced by Arlene because she reveals that Jungle Julia has secretly said something bad about herself through the live interview at the radio station. Speaking of which, insulting someone through the employment of taboo words can be categorized as a form of social motive. Andersson and Trudgill (1992) claimed that social factor contains some particular categories and insulting other people turns to be one of them. On the bases of the previous explanation, the researcher therefore argues that it is extremely crucial to examine and carry out the existence of taboo words in *Death Proof* movie used by the main characters to the scientific research in which the title can be formulated as follow "Taboo words in the Main Characters of *Death Proof* Movie".

Research Questions

Concerning with the major issue elaborated on introduction section, a number of questions are eventually raised.

1. What the types of taboo words are used by the main characters in *Death Proof* movie?
2. What motives do influence the main characters to utter taboo words in *Death Proof* movie?

Objectives of Research

Pertaining to the research questions, this present research thereby aims at investigating types of taboo words as well as the motives that strongly affect or influence the main characters in *Death Proof* movie to utter such words.

Significances of Research

In accordance with the research background and objectives, the researcher hopes that this masterpiece contributes useful significances to the readers for both theoretically and practically. With regard to the theoretical side, the readers are able to obtain better comprehension about the correlation between taboo words and culture. Be specific to taboo words used in this present research, the readers may get familiarized with characteristics of taboo words from the cultural viewpoint of American people and it enables them to differentiate those taboo words with certain words deemed as taboo in other cultures. Apart from that, since the researcher also focuses on the types and motives encouraging the main

characters of *Death Proof* movie to speak taboo words, what the researcher hopes is that the readers can broaden their insight regarding the above-mentioned matters. Thereby, once they are facing someone who speaks taboo words, they find easier to recognize its classification alongside with the motive.

From practical aspect, the researcher expects that the presence of this research is going to be more beneficial for teaching activities in linguistic field particularly. The lecturers may utilize the topic of this research concerning with taboo words to be tangibly taught to students in the form of primary material. Furthermore, the researcher wishes that the upcoming researchers consider and take this research as an efficient reference to conduct their scientific paper including those students who are interested in discussing taboo language. Last but not least, the most important thing is that this research will contribute to raise readers' attitude manner. Since taboo words reflect the applicable values in a particular culture, the readers are then suggested not to speak such words as free as they want so that misunderstanding is going to be avoidable.

Scope of Research

Scope of research is one of the important requirements in conducting a research. It should be included into a research in order to avoid broadness or generalization. Being more specific to this present research, the researcher mainly focuses on the utterances that contain taboo words generated by the main characters in a Quentin Tarantino movie which is entitled *Death Proof*. Speaking of which, the researcher also formulates a limitation in which taboo words

presented are those words considered as taboo based on the cultural view of American society and their tendency of producing uncomfortable feelings such as offensiveness, harmful or embarrassment in the context of movie. Apart from that, to be able to answer research questions which are the types and motives of using taboo words, the researcher applies the theories proposed by Timothy Jay and Andersson-Trudgill.