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## TABOO WORDS IN MAIN CHARACTERS OF *DEATH PROOF* MOVIE

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**Abstract:** The use of taboo words is strongly influenced by culture. In the growing discourse of use of taboo words in social reality, men are often portrayed to have discourteous traits and utter any form of taboo words when compared to women. However, a movie entitled *Death Proof* does not show the same trend. The present research aimed at investigating taboo words in the mentioned movie by focusing on their types and motives. Through the utilization of observation and documentation techniques, the data comprised utterances of the main characters that contained taboo words. The results revealed that the main characters employed taboos of profanity, obscenity, vulgarity, epithet and insult. Pertaining to women, they also fulfill those various classifications. Conversely, insult and profanity were the typical types men uttered during the movie. In regard to the motives of using taboo words, it was discovered that psychological, social and linguistic motives tend to stimulate male characters to utter taboo words, while women are merely affected by psychological and social motives. From the results, the research concludes that female characters utter taboo words more variably than men. However, women's variability on the production of taboo words is limited to certain situations, while men apply taboo words in multiple contexts.

**Keywords:** *Culture; death proof movie; taboo words; the main characters*

### INTRODUCTION

Culture plays an important role in influencing the way people use language. This is due to the fact that culture does not only address some particular items such as music, literature, or forms of arts, but it also emerges as a system that regulates the entire aspects of life with regard to values, beliefs, norms, behaviors, and also the language usage (Greedy, 1994). Because of its relationship to culture, language can arguably be one of the media for people to create their social identity and, in turn, it represents to what culture they belong. Such an idea is actually in consonance with the

statement of Wardhaugh (2010) in which "the culture of a people finds reflection in the language they employ" (p. 230). Hence, the previous explanation significantly brings a proper understanding to the 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 something that portrays people's culture. To give some weight to the statement, what applies in South Africa may become one of the relevant examples. People who live in the

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country, especially women, believe that speaking their husband's name directly as well as the father-in-law is something that they should avoid. When women break the taboo by speaking their husband's or father-in-law's name, they will be punished in accordance with the rules applied in that society. The statement made by Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams (2010) supports the phenomenon.

"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 cannot be obscene or clean; attitudes toward specific words or linguistic expressions reflect the views of a culture or society toward the behaviors and actions of the language users." (p. 478-479).

In connection with the previous proponent, it can simply be understood that the use of taboo language/words is strongly affected by the culture itself. The influence of a growing culture about use of taboo words portray men as individuals who possess discourteous traits. As a result, such traits stimulate them to use any form of taboo words, while women cannot. One of the prime examples reflecting this matter comes from Chambers and Trudgill (1998) who assert 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 employ polite forms of utterances in the conversation, they are not expected to use taboo words (Coats, 2004). As a consequence, when women employ taboo words, particularly in high frequency, it will negatively influence their reputation. Stapleton as cited in Johnova (2011) says 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 changes over time, the inclination of using taboo words does not only apply 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. One of the movies that demonstrates the employment of taboo words is a Quentin Tarantino movie entitled *Death Proof*. This movie was chosen as the subject of the research due to the tendency of the main characters who linguistically utter certain words categorized into taboo: for both male and female characters. Speaking about taboo words used by the main characters of *Death Proof*, 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). Another form of taboo words in the mentioned movie also comes from the character named Arlene. Let us consider the following utterance when she says, "**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**" (00:12:03-00:12:08).

On the basis of the previous explanation, the researcher therefore argues that it is extremely crucial to examine the existence of taboo words in *Death Proof* by focusing on its types and also motives which influence the main characters in producing such words.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### The concept of taboo

Wardhaugh (1992) claims that taboos are a method of the society's members to express their disapproval towards particular behaviors which become dangers to another members either from religious or moral violation aspects. In other words, certain words become taboo if they are spoken to violate the values held or believed by its members of a society.

Words are also taboo once people employ them to bring the sense of uncomfortable feelings such as offensiveness. Hughes as cited in Ljung (2011) explains that "the term of taboo has now come to be used to denote 'any social indiscretion that ought to be avoided' and

has acquired the modern meaning of ‘offensive’ or ‘grossly impolite’ rather than ‘strictly forbidden’”(p. 05). In the same line, Alland and Burrige (2006) support the idea in which a certain word is characterized into taboo if it tends to be employed by speakers to offend or hurt other people. Their idea can clearly be viewed through the direct statement below.

“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 befall either on speaker or the audience, but lest the speaker loses face by offending the sensibilities of the audience.” (p.237-238)

Realizing that taboo words tend to be producing various uncomfortable feelings, it accordingly encourages people to only utilize such words in certain circumstances and certain individuals. Wardhaugh (2006) declares,

“Taboo is the prohibition or avoidance in any society of behavior believed to be harmful to its members in that it would cause them anxiety, embarrassment or shame. It is an extremely strong politeness constraint. Consequently, so far as language is concerned, certain things are not to be said or certain objects can be referred to only in certain circumstances, for example, only by certain people” (p. 239).

Looking at those characteristics of taboo words, one thing should be kept in mind however that it is quite difficult to determine taboo words because every society possess its own values used to view whether the words are deemed as taboo or not. In western culture, including American culture, people view taboo as words that are correlated with sexual organs, sexual relations, religion, and many more (Andersson as cited in Karjalainen, 2002). Further, Trudgill (2000) states that “in the English-speaking world, the most severe taboos are now associated with words connected with sex, closely followed by those connected with excretion and the Christian religion” (p. 19). Nearly the same, Leach (1976) suggests that taboo words in English consist of several

aspects such as animal abuse (calling other people the name of an animal), words that have to do with the Christian religion and sex.

Although taboo words are almost unavoidable in a society, on several occasions people can still avoid them with the use of what language experts call euphemism. Wardhaugh (2006) defines that “Euphemistic words and expressions allow us to talk about unpleasant things and disguise or neutralize the unpleasantness” (p. 240). As an example, “fuck” which is associated with sexual intercourse can be replaced with f-word, making love or sleeping together, “cunt” for c-word and so on.

Aside from euphemisms, there is also another term that comes up along with taboo. The term referred to is going to be neutral or non-taboo words. The words regarded as neutral or non-taboo do not possess both euphemism and taboo senses. For examples, the word sex may become the neutral substitution of “fuck”. Yet, it should always be remembered that the meaning of neutral words may be changed depending on the situation. Therefore, the language users need to be careful in uttering such words.

### **Types of taboo words**

According to Jay (1992), taboo words consist of some particular classifications. (1) Cursing is commonly spoken to invoke harm and something bad in the future to those who are being its object. *Damn you* and *I hope you break your neck* are few instances of cursing words. (2) Taboo of profanity is about using religious terminology that is believed as something sacred including the name of God or holy affairs in a secular or indifferent manner. The typical instances can be something like *Jesus H Christ, I’m hungry!* (3) Blasphemy relates to certain words utilized by the speakers with an aim to directly or abusively attack the church, religious doctrine, figure and religious authority. The model of blasphemy is able to be seen through the following utterances

such as *Screw the pope* (4) Obscenity is a type of taboo word that point to something sexual in nature, either sex acts or sex imagery. The relevant words categorized into taboo of obscenity are *fuck*, *motherfucker* and *cocksucker*. (5) Vulgarity denotes the crudeness of the street language spoken by ill-mannered, under-socialized or under-educated person and it describes body parts of human which are quite vulgar to be heard and spoken out. The samples of vulgarity are *tits*, *dick*, *cock*, *ass*, and *asshole*. (6) Slang indicates developing words from certain sub-groups including musicians, soldiers, gangstars, drug users, etc. used to make the process of communication easier (7) Epithet. When people are saying brief words such as *fuck*, *damn*, *fuck you*, *piss off* etc. it can be assumed that they use one classification of taboo, which is epithet. Epithet words are brief, but they become powerful in the situations where someone does something stupid or frustrating. (8) Taboo of slur refers to racial, ethnic, social and stereotyping or prejudice from the speakers. For instance, “Yank” or “Yankee”. 9) Unlike slur, insult shows the physical, mental, or psychological qualities of the target and it is usually based on animal imagery, social deviations and abnormal physical, psychological, or social characteristics. Their typical examples are something like *dog*, *bitch*, *son of a bitch*, *whore*, *slut*, *bastard*, *homo*, *fatty*, *booger nose* and *weirdo* (10) Scatology points at any terms which correlate to human waste products and processes used in the toilet trained. In light of this, *poo poo*, *poop*, *crap*, *piss*, *shit*, *piss*, *piss pot*, *piss off* and *fart* can be best models to explain about scatological words.

### Motives of using taboo words

Andersson and Trudgill (1992) elaborate that psychological, social, and linguistic motives can be the significant motives for people in employing taboo words. (1) Psychological motive deals with the emotional feeling of people as the expression towards something. This idea is supported by Mateo and Yus as cited in Murphy (2010) in which they confirm that taboo words can be a tool to be releasing

and reducing emotional tension. Emotional tension or feeling is definitely oriented with anger, fear, disgust, surprise, stressful, depression and even joy. (2) Jay (1999) on his book *Why We Curse* mentions that “psychological factors are necessary, but not sufficient.” (p. 95). Discussing about social motive in the specific way, it is usually associated to whom the speakers interact with and where taboo words are being spoken. In this case, Andersson and Trudgill (1992) clarify that social motive consists of several characteristics such as to show identity, shock, insult, or to highlight asocial distance. (3) Linguistic motive of using taboo words does not directly refer to attack a person, but it just appears as pure motive on linguistic subject which denoting the word-option or grammatical structures and also giving emphasize for the topic that is being discussed. For instance, *Jesus fucking Christ!*

### METHODOLOGY

*Death Proof* is a Hollywood movie directed by Quentin Tarantino and released in the year 2007. This movie can be categorized as one of the masterpieces of Hollywood that has drawn many controversies because it contains extreme scenes and also taboo words. Thus, to analyze taboo words in the mentioned movie, the qualitative method was purposively employed. Through the utilization of observation and documentation techniques, the researcher considered the data as utterances of the main characters that contained taboo words. Speaking about research data, there are a few steps that the researcher performed to obtain the data. The first step was watching the movie as well as identifying various utterances of the main characters that contain particular words assumed as taboo. The second step pointed out to the process of reducing data. The third step was about creating the final note. The selected data as the result of data reduction were transferred to the final note to be analyzed in more specific way.

After collecting the data, the

researcher then analyzed the utterances of the main characters that contained taboo words through the following steps. (1) The researcher started by categorizing the utterances that indicated taboo words produced by the main characters into types along with their motives (2) The researcher conducted the analysis by taking the results of data categorization and organizing them into paragraphs. Pertaining to types of taboo words, the analysis was based on Americans' view about taboo words as well as the way how the main characters in *Death Proof* movie employed such words. To analyze types of taboo words, the researcher then applied Jay's theory. When it comes to the motives of using taboo words, the researcher determined the motives through the conversational context, face expression, gestures or voice intonation of the main characters. In light of this, the theory of Lars-Gunnar Andersson and Peter Trudgill (1992) was employed to analyze those motives. (3) Moving forward to the next step, the researcher interpreted the results of analysis. (4) The researcher drew the conclusion in reliance on findings and data analysis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After viewing the language usage in a movie entitled *Death Proof*, the researcher discovered certain utterances spoken out by the main characters which possess huge potential to be categorized into the types of taboo words. Besides, the researcher also identified various motives which influence the main characters to employ such taboo words.

### Profanity

When a group of people speak something that is connected with religious aspects in particular the name of God or holy affairs as free as they want, it signifies that one type of taboo words called profanity has been employed. In *Death Proof*, profanity shows up in the utterance of Jungle Julia and regarding this her utterance is able to be seen in the timestamp 00:03:33 – 00:03:37.

Jungle Julia: (to Shanna) "*Jesus Christ*, Shanna. It is not my fucking job to supply y'all with weed when we go out"

Julia's utterance tends to be profanity since it evidently contains the words *Jesus Christ* which are known as the name of God in the Christian religion (Jesus Christ, 2008). To support the idea, Jay (1992) explains that every single utterance indicating religious terms in particular the name of God is regarded into profanity. However, categorizing Jungle Julia's utterance is quite tricky because profanity is almost similar with blasphemy in which they point out to religious aspects. The different thing is that while profanity shows indifference or secular about something sacred such as the name of God or holy affairs, blasphemy directly aims at abusing or attacking everything that is connected to the church including religious figures and religious authority. In other words, people who use blasphemy would be aware of the direct insult to these institutions, whereas the profane might not (Jay, 1992).

The words *Jesus Christ* from Julia's utterance also is taboo since they break the applicable cultural value in American society particularly of those who are Christians. This is due to the existence of 'Ten Commandments' in their religion in which the third point goes to the command or statement that "you may not misuse the name of God" (Muho & Bakir, 2014). Goddard (2015) also argues that uttering religious terms such as the name of God freely in American society is a more sensitive matter compared to Australian people who are more tolerant of it. Similarly, Trudgill (2000) states that "in an English-speaking world, the most severe taboos are now associated with words connected with sex, closely followed by those connected with excretion and the Christian religion" (p. 19).

Jungle Julia produces the unexpected utterance as contained above because she becomes surprised after hearing Arlene and Shanna's request. Considering this, both Arlene and Shanna expect that Julia will spend the amount of her money for buying them foods at Gueros Taco bar. In the

movie, Julia's surprise feeling can be witnessed through facial expression in which she apparently glares at her two friends and then gives a sinister smile. Andersson and Trudgill (1992) address that psychological motive of using taboo words are usually used to express certain feelings such as anger, fear, grief, disgust, surprise, stressful, depression, joy and sorrow. Psychological motive is also applicable to men characters of *Death Proof* movie in which they utter taboo words as a way to express surprise feeling. For example, Pete produces the utterance "*Jesus!*" because he is surprised with the unexpected act of Stuntman Mike.

Another similar form of profanity discovered in the movie could be spotted through the utterance expressed by Stuntman Mike in the period of timestamp 01:47:34 – 01:47:37.

Stuntman Mike: "Yeah! Yeah! *Jesus fucking Christ!* It's about time!"

Stuntman Mike's utterance is categorized as taboo of profanity because it indicates *Jesus Christ* known as God's name in Christian religion (Jesus Christ, 2008) and it breaks an important value in Christian religion as contained on 'Ten Commandments' in which God's name is not appropriate to be used or uttered freely outside of the religious context. Wardhaugh (1992) explains that taboo is method of the society's members to express their disapproval towards particular behaviors which become danger to another member either from religious or moral violation aspects.

Speaking about Stuntman Mike's utterance, the researcher regarded it as linguistic motive due to the word *fucking*. *Fucking* on his utterance does not exist as a sexual act neither insulting other people, but it only shows up with a purpose to emphasize something. In this case, based on the context of the movie, Stuntman Mike wants to stress that he feels lucky because Kim, Zoe and Abernathy are no longer chasing him. Andersson and Trudgill (1992) claim that linguistic motive of using taboo words does not attack or insult people, yet it is just pure motive on linguistic subject that

denotes the word-option or emphasizes something that is being discussed or happened.

### Obscenity

Obscenity is one type of taboo words that is sexual in nature and consists of sex acts and sex imagery. Taking this into consideration, the emergence of the obscenity type is spoken by one of the female characters named Pam in the time stamp 00:30:05 – 00:30:14.

Pam: "Get famous. You won't have to find her. She'll find you and you don't even wanna know what she did for that billboard. Enjoy it, *cocksucker* (to *Jungle Julia*). You've earned it"

In accordance with the above utterance, Pam has obviously uttered something that is relatable to sexuality. A particular word possessing the sense of sexual matter in this case refers to the word *cocksucker*. Latimer (1994) then determines *cocksucker* as an obscene noun which describes one person who performs fellatio. The researcher remembered that there is one classification of taboo words which tends to denote either sexual acts or sex imagery. In this case, the type of taboo words referred to is obscenity. Through the book entitled *Cursing in America*, it is asserted that "in American English, obscenities are pointedly sexual in nature" (Jay, 1992, p. 05).

The word *cocksucker* generated by Pam becomes taboo because of two main aspects which are macrocontext and microcontext. According to Hongxu and Guisen (1990), macrocontext is influenced by social factors such as social structure and cultural heritage. Thus, from macro contextual aspect, any obscene (i.e. *fuck*, *cocksucker*, *motherfucker*, etc.), indecent or profane words are socially prohibited in American society by an organization named Federal Communication Commission (Ljung, 2011).

Pertaining to the microcontext (situational) aspect, there are five important

factors in the micro contextual aspect that strongly determine taboo words. Those five are consisting of participants including relationship to each other, purpose of conversation, content or subject matter, setting and medium (Hongxu and Guisen, 1990). Taking participant factor as the example, the researcher perhaps did not categorize the word *cocksucker* on Pam's utterance if it is thrown out to her close friends for instance who may tolerate any form of language. Yet, the problem is that Pam uses the word *cocksucker* special for Jungle Julia, the one she really hates the most. Therefore, the employment of *cocksucker* is definitely going to trigger offensiveness, hurt or embarrassment for another person which is in this case Jungle Julia herself. In accordance with Wardhaugh (2006),

"Taboo is the prohibition or avoidance in any society of behavior believed to be harmful to its members in that it would cause them anxiety, embarrassment or shame. It is an extremely strong politeness constraint. Consequently, so far as language is concerned, certain things are not to be said or certain objects can be referred to only in certain circumstances, for example, only by certain people" (p. 239).

Based on the previous description, Pam is motivated to generate an utterance containing taboo words as a way to insult another person which is in this case Jungle Julia. In the scene where this utterance takes place, Pam reveals that she is jealous of Jungle Julia and has not liked her since they were in high school. Indeed, during the movie Jungle Julia is narrated as a famous local DJ in Austin city. Pam's jealousy is reflected through the facial expression in which she sharply stares at Jungle Julia with her upper lip raised and then shows her middle finger from a distance. Due to this reason, the researcher concludes that a social motive is playing a crucial role in it. Andersson and Trudgill (1992) maintained that social motive consists of several characteristics such as to show identity, shock, insult, and mark social distance.

## Vulgarity

Vulgarity is determined as one type of taboo words which denotes the crudeness of the street language and describes body parts of human which are quite vulgar to be heard and uttered. Speaking about vulgarity, its employment can be observed in the timestamp 01:01:12 – 01:01:13.

Lee: (to Stuntman Mike) "Little dick".

As indicated on Lee's utterance, there is one word that interestingly needs to be analyzed which is in this case referring to *dick*. In accordance with Dalzell and Victor (2007), *dick* has a common definition as penis or clitoris. It is the portrayal of man's genital organ functioning for sexual activity and also the place where the excretion process takes place. Among several classifications of taboo words proposed by Jay, the researcher argues that the word *dick* indicated on Lee's utterance can be included into vulgarity due to the fact that it is defined as men genital organ.

Another reason why the word *dick* on Lee's utterance turns to be taboo is because of the social value. In western culture including American culture, people view taboo as words that are correlated with sexual organ, sexual relation, religion and many more (Andersson as cited in Karjalainen, 2002). Speaking about taboo of vulgarity, the researcher might not categorize the word *dick* on Lee's utterance as taboo once it is replaced with euphemism or at least neutral words. Wardhaugh (2006) defines that "Euphemistic words and expressions allow us to talk about unpleasant things and disguise or neutralize the unpleasantness" (p. 240). In light case, the researcher came with the alternatives in which instead of saying *dick*, man's vital organ or penis is probably much better.

Aside from that, the researcher found difficulties to classify the word *dick* on Lee's utterance since it possesses the sense of sexuality which definitely becomes the characteristic of obscenity and vulgarity. Yet, in reference to the book *Cursing in*

America, Jay (1992) claims that obscenity points out to sexual in nature and it is mostly about sex act and the imagery that refers to sexual activities. Obscene words, something like *fuck*, are defined as an act of sexual intercourse (Ayto, 1998) and *cocksucker* known as one person who performs fellatio (Latimer, 1994). In the meantime, vulgarity is not necessarily taboo. It just reflects the crudeness of street language and describes things related to sexuality more specifically body parts of human which are vulgar to be heard and uttered. The examples of vulgar words go to *dick*, *cock*, *ass*, etc. Even so, in the context of Lee's utterance, the word *dick* is still considered taboo. This is due to the fact that Lee during the movie apparently humiliates Stuntman Mike by stating his genital organ is small. Carpenter as cited in Mercury (1995) also adds that each of the utterances or expressions containing vulgarity terms will have vulgar and offensive sense when they are employed to humiliate or bring down the thing or person referred to or described.

In the movie, the above utterance indicates the word *dick* takes place when Stuntman Mike greatly feels tempted to touch Abernathy's legs put in the car window. Without any desperation, Stuntman Mike starts to act his intention by using his tongue. Abernathy then surprisingly gets up from her sleep and assumes that there is someone who has licked her feet. In a sharp gaze, Abernathy and her friend named Lee put suspicion on Stuntman Mike. Because the action has almost been figured out, Stuntman Mike stomps the gas pedals making his car runs faster. Seeing this, both Abernathy and Lee are speechless and after the car disappears Lee spontaneously produces "little *dick*" to Stuntman Mike. In reliance on the previous explanation, the researcher can interpret that Lee is doing an insult to Stuntman Mike through the use of such utterance and it can also be strengthened by the gesture Lee does in the movie where she symbolizes half of her pinkie finger as a way of describing the genital organ of Stuntman Mike that is small or not that big. After doing so, both Abernathy and Lee

## Epithet

Taboo of epithet demonstrates the emotional language. Words classified into epithet are characterized as brief words, but they become powerful both in presentation and in offensiveness. In *Death Proof* movie, the researcher found the presence of epithet in the timestamp 01:34:53 – 01:34:54 through Kim's utterance below.

Kim: (to Stuntman Mike) "Fuck you!"

Kim's utterance obviously contains the phrase consisting of an interesting word to be analyzed which is *fuck*. Ayto (1998) determines that one meaning of *fuck* will be an act of sexual intercourse. Although *fuck* is often defined so, the researcher does not consider it as a type of obscenity. In this case, Kim has never intended to have sexual activity with Stuntman Mike through the word *fuck*. She only employs that word as a strong emotional response against what Stuntman Mike does which is crushing their car very hard. Thereby, it can be predicted that the suitable type of taboo words for the word *fuck* indicated on Kim's utterance is epithet not obscenity. Jay (1992) claims that epithets are brief, but they become powerful words and people use them to express emotional feeling for instance when someone does something stupid or frustrating as well as marking the sense of hostility, etc.

In accordance with the situational context where Kim's utterance takes place, the researcher finally comprehends that the motive that stimulates her to utter taboo word goes to psychological motive. This is due to the fact that Kim throws the word *fuck* as a way to express her emotional feeling in particular madness and it is reflected through high intonation of her voice. Andersson and Trudgill (1992) argue that psychological motive of using taboo words deals with the emotional feelings of people and madness/anger becomes one of them. This is also supported by Mateo and Yus as cited in Murphy (2010) who state

that taboo words can be a tool in releasing and reducing emotional tension or feeling.

### Insult

Taboo of insult describes the physical, mental, or psychological qualities of an individual by using both animal imagery and social deviations. To better understand about this insult type, the researcher presents its existence through datum below which taken in the timestamp 00:25:08 – 00:25:11.

Jungle Julia: (to Pam) “No, but I know she’s a skinny fake blonde *bitch*”.

As presented by the above statement, it shows that there is the word *bitch* on Jungle Julia’s utterance. The word *bitch* is a kind of animal referring to female dog (Bitch, 2008). In relation to this definition, the researcher does not classify *bitch* into part of taboo words as long as it truly refers to the animal term. However, when someone uses *bitch* to another person just like Jungle Julia does to verbally call Pam, then it may be considered as the offensive matter and it probably underlies why *bitch* on her utterance turns to be taboo.

Alland and Burrige (2006) argue that a certain word is characterized into taboo if it tends to be employed by speakers to offend or hurt other people. In addition to that, Leach (1976) suggests that taboo words in English consists of several aspects in which one of them goes to the words which are employed in animal abuse. Animal abuse refers to calling other people with the name of animal. By using a theory of Timothy Jay, the researcher then categorized the word *bitch* indicated on Jungle Julia’s utterance as insult type. In this case, Jay (1992) asserts that the taboo of insults shows the physical, mental, or psychological qualities of the target in which one of the categories would be based on animal imagery such as *pig*, *bitch*, *jackass* etc. Apparently, through her utterance Jungle Julia is trying to describe the physical of Pam by saying a skinny fake blonde *bitch*.

Referring to Jungle Julia’s answer, the researcher strongly considers her utterance as a form of humiliation or insulting since it is

produced to objectify Pam. Jungle Julia utters the *bitch* because she does understand that Pam is her rival and both of them have never liked with each other even from high school. This can be seen through the act shown by Jungle Julia when Arlene asks her whether or not she still recognizes Pam who is sitting right in front of them. However, Jungle Julia shows the unexpected expression in which she sharply stares at Pam for a second and with a forced smile tells everyone that Pam is a skinny blonde *bitch*. As a result, *bitch* indicated on the utterance of Jungle Julia is then appropriate enough to be put into social motive considering that insulting other people is one characteristic of social motive (Andersson and Trudgill, 1992).

The same example of insult type is spoken out by one of the men characters named Omar which is able to be seen in timestamp 00:23:24 – 00:23:27.

Omar: “...Come on dude, we can at least get one shot of Jager down these fucking *bitches*’ throats”

In reference to Omar’s utterance, the researcher is able to categorize it as taboo of insult since the word *bitch* exists there. From that name-calling, conversational context as well as the facial expression of Omar, the researcher speculates that Omar’s utterance is driven by social motive with an aim to do an insult although it appears along with the word *fucking* which seems to be the characteristic of linguistic motive. This is due to the fact that the word *fucking* in linguistic motive does not have connotation to attack or insult people, yet it just comes up as pure motive on linguisticsubject that denote the word-option and emphasize something that is being discussed or happened (Andersson & Trudgill, 1992).

On the basis of fairly long explanation about types of taboo words used by the main characters in *Death Proof*, as well as the motives that affect them, the researcher is finally able to create interpretations regarding those matters. In light of this, female characters in the movie

tend to utter various taboo words compared to men. Among the classifications of taboo words proposed by Timothy Jay, female characters prove that they use taboo words with regard to profanity, obscenity, vulgarity, epithet and insult. Unlike women, men characters prefer using taboo of profanity and insult.

This is actually a great observation to prove that taboo words do not primarily refer to men, but women turn out to speak taboo words. This is due to fact that not only black female characters such as Kim and Jungle Julia who speak taboo words which turn to be their identical language (Klerk, 1992), but those white people also have a significant contribution as well. As a consequence, the researcher argued that such invention seems to illustrate and counter the expectation that is constantly portrayed and happened in the cultural context. For instance, Chambers and Trudgill (1998) declare that the use of taboo words is only regarded to men. In the same vein, because women are regarded as individuals who tend to use super polite forms or at least polite forms, they are never expected to employ taboo words (Coats, 2004).

When it comes to the motives of employing taboo words, the researcher unexpectedly had an appealing point about it. As mentioned before, it is true that female characters in *Death Proof* produce many varieties of taboo words, yet they are only motivated by psychological and social motives. Men on the other hand employ taboo words because three complete motives consisting of psychological, social and linguistic motives drive them. Therefore, the researcher has to claim that although female characters are more varied in uttering taboo words, the researcher invented that their variability on the employment of such words is just limited in certain situations compared to men who get influenced to speak words categorized as taboo almost in the entire contexts.

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

### Conclusions

Based on the research that has been accomplished, the main characters either men or

women in *Death Proof* contribute in uttering taboo words. This can be revealed by the data which clearly show how particular utterances of the main characters tend to be classified as part of taboo. To be more specific, those utterances spoken out by the characters are dominated with various classifications such as profanity, obscenity, vulgarity, epithet and insult. Yet, an important matter should be kept in mind that this research uncovers a slight difference between male and female characters on the use of taboo words. Under the specific analysis in the previous section, women in the movie utter taboo words more frequently and in varied situations compared to men.

Further, this research also brings to light another point which is equally essential to be discussed. It discovered that the main characters of *Death Proof* speak taboo words because there must be certain motives that strongly affect them. To be specific, the motives of using taboo words found in the movie mainly point out to psychological, social and linguistic motive. While those three complete motives drive men to talk about words deemed as taboo, women on the other hand are solely motivated or stimulated by social and psychological motives.

### Suggestions

The researcher is aware that the presence of this research will contribute to providing positive benefits for students in which they are able to broaden their knowledge about taboo words. However, the researcher also realizes that there must be an unfavorable impact arising from it because students may misuse taboo words. Thus, the researcher suggests that students need to be very careful and not carelessly speak taboo words since this kind of language can produce uncomfortable feelings such as offensiveness or perhaps the employment of taboo words is still tolerable when they are able to consider the appropriate place and time to use.

Also, the researcher merely pays

attention to the types and motives of using taboo words in the movie entitled *Death Proof*. There are a couple of things which have not been discussed and covered here such as the correlation between the employment of taboo words with social class or even the effect of age in determining someone to speak words deemed as taboo. Thus, it is hoped that the future researchers take the above-mentioned examples as their reference in conducting their scientific work.

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## LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE

Dear **Oldi Simon, Syarifuddin Ahmad, Rahman Taufiqrianto Dako,**

We are pleased to inform you that your manuscript entitled, “**Taboo Words in Main Characters of *Death Proof* Movie**” has been accepted by our Editorial Board after successfully passing the blind review and revisions. The manuscript has also been checked for plagiarism by Turnitin and the result showed that the similarity index (SI) of your manuscript is acceptable. It is scheduled for publication in the Volume 1 Issue 2 May Edition of the “**TRANS-KATA: Journal of Language, Literature, Culture, and Education**”.

We will send the gallery proof of your paper for the final revision after all the quality control checks and prior to publishing the article. The galley proofs must be returned to us within 2 calendar days. Furthermore, you are responsible for any error in the published paper due to your oversight.

Thank you very much for submitting your article to the “**TRANS-KATA: Journal of Language, Literature, Culture, and Education**”. We welcome your contributions in future.

Date: May 28, 2021

Best Regards,



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