

SWEARING IN BANJARNESE: A GENDER ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Swearing has been regarded as taboo in many cultures. Those who swear, especially in public, are usually regarded as impolite person. Despite the bad stigma it has, swearing is part of everyday life. This study aims to analyze the swearing words used by Banjarnese. The researchers apply the gender analysis as the main theoretical framework. The data of this study are swearing words commonly used by Banjarnese, regardless of age or educational background. The swearing words are classified into; those mostly used by male and those used by female. The researchers draw conclusion after classifying the group of words and what they represent. Based on the findings, it is found that male and female mostly use different words to swear. Female uses wider range of words to swear in comparison to the words used by male.

Keywords : swearing; Banjarnese; gender study

Introduction

In many cultures, swearing words has been regarded as taboo and offending. Andersson & Trudgill (2007) define swearing as language use in which the expression refers to something taboo or stigmatized in the swearer's culture. Further, he mentioned that swearing should not be interpreted literally. Swearing can be used to express strong emotions or attitudes. In addition, Ljung (1986) in Wang (2013) stated that swearing might reflect bad behavior and poor education yet it might also related to some positive qualities. Similarly, Jay & Janschewitz (20018) argued that swearing carries can be polite, impolite or even neither of them. It is, however, usually used to express many emotional states. Swearing could be used to intentionally offend others, and it could also reflect a certain level of solidarity and closeness.

This study is set based on the language feature of women introduced by Lakoff. She stated that women tend to avoid the use of strong language. This might relate to the assumption that women are regarded as the 'protector' of a language thus they should use the language appropriately. Society, on the other hand, also has certain expectation of how women should behave and use language. This research is intended to describe the language use of Banjarnese male and female, specifically the swearing words. Banjarnese is commonly spoken by Banjarnese people, the native of South Kalimantan, Indonesia. This language is influenced by Malay, Arabic, and Dayak language. It is still used daily as lingua franca in all of regions in south Kalimantan. Unlike many other big cities in Indonesia, Banjarnese language is still commonly used by youngsters in Banjarmasin, the capital of south Kalimantan. Though, some language shifting still occurs.

This study is expected to provide elaborated description of the words commonly used by Banjarnese male and female to curse. This, then, will be followed by an insight of

Banjarnese culture, including the position of male and female in society, which might influence the language use of each gender.

Theoretical Framework

Proposed by Lakoff, the ten features of women's speech have been the underlying theory of many studies related to language and gender. These features have also been contrasted to many different cultures; some supports the theory and some other are against it – proving no distinction in men and women's speech. However, the theory remains as the corner stone of many gender studies. One of the features mentioned by Lakoff is the avoidance of strong swear words. This means that women are expected to talk nicely and avoid the use of harsh words – including swearing. While men can speak and use language however they want, women are bind to many rules set by society. However, each language reflects the society where it is spoken, including certain standard and expectation entitled to the members of the society. These standards and expectations are surely vary from one language to another langue.

A quite contrastive to Lakoff's feature of women language, some studies related to the use of language by Banjarnese women have suggested that women possess more freedom to express their opinion and feelings. Lestary (2013) mentioned that there is no clear cut on how Banjarnese men and women perceive the conversations they are in. Either gender can be supportive or competitive. This result is also quite different to Holmes (1995) who stated that women tend to be more affectionate and focus on building solidarity in conversations. Meanwhile, men tend to be more competitive to their counterparts. Furthermore, Krismati (2013) stated that although Banjarnese women have lower position and status in the society than men do, still they can express their feelings – and even complain or nag – freely. Another study conducted by Lestary et al (2016) also suggested that the role of Banjarnese women are not only the object of an action, but they are also capable of being the actor of an event. This means that women possess certain power in society to act or to express their thought and feeling.

Research Methods

This study is a descriptive study as the main objective of this study is to describe the existing natural phenomenon. In this study, the researchers observe the use of particular language in a society. Further, this study is also regarded as qualitative study. The researchers in such study, according to Cresswell (2009), gather multiple forms of data, such as observations, documents, and interviews, instead of relying on a single data source only. Thus, as the data are obtained through interview, this study could be regarded as a qualitative study.

The data in this study are swearing words used by Banjarnese people. In order to obtain the data, researchers requested 40 students to list the words they usually use to swear or words they commonly hear from other people. The students consisted of 27 female and 13 male. They are specifically instructed to divide the list into two categories; words commonly used by female and those used by male. Admitting the fact that no single swearing word is exclusively uttered by one gender only, still the researcher believe that there are words that are commonly used and found in certain gender.

Findings and Discussions

This study was conducted by asking 40 students – 27 female and 13 male- to write down the swearing words they commonly used. They were instructed to classify the words into those usually used by female and those commonly spoken by male. There are 53 words written down by the students; 26 are used by male and 27 are used by female.

Table 1. List of Swearing Words

Male	Female
Bongol	Bunyul
Tambuk	Waluh
Sinting	Anjay
Gila	Anjret
Miring	Kada bautak
Bancrat	Hirangan
Kada samparaka	Wardah(wrik dahan)
Hungang	Ganyau
Penga	Kada intai
Gublok	Kantut
Bangkui wara	Buhaya
Dasar warik	Baung
Utuh guring	Purici
Kambing	Marigat
Dasar warik	Kada beaki

Before analyzing the words, the researchers classified the words into several groups based on the characteristics of the words. They are words related to animals, vegetables, brain function, insanity, and obscenity/vulgarity. However, due to limited knowledge, the researchers cannot classify some words listed by the students. The words and the classifications are listed below.

Animal abuse

Table 2. Swearing Words under the Category of Animal Abuse

Male	Female
<i>Bangkui wara</i>	<i>Anjay</i> (dog)
<i>Dasar warik</i>	<i>Anjret</i> (dog)
(monkey)	<i>Hirangan</i> (monkey)
<i>Kambing</i> (goat)	<i>Wardah</i> (monkey)
	<i>Buhaya</i> (crocodile)
	<i>Baung</i> (kind of fish)
	<i>Gonggong</i> (sound of dog barking)

Male and female commonly used different animals to curse. While men tend to swear by saying monkey or goat, women mostly use different names of dog to curse. Women also swear by saying the word 'buhaya' which means crocodile and 'baung' which refers to type

of cat fish that is commonly found in river in South Kalimantan. These two words used by women are usually associated with the act of being player.

Vegetables

Table 2. Swearing Words under the Category of Vegetables

Male	Female
-	<i>Waluh</i> (pumpkin)

It is interesting to find that female do curse by using name of vegetables. Further, no students mention the same word or similar words under this category for male.

Brain function

Table 3. Swearing Words under the Category of Brain Function

Male	Female
<i>Hungang</i>	<i>Nganga</i>
<i>Lengo</i>	<i>Pina bebungulan</i>
<i>Bongol</i>	<i>Lengo</i>
<i>Hunggang</i>	<i>Bengak</i>
<i>Penga</i>	<i>Tambuk</i>
<i>Gublok</i>	<i>Kada bautak</i>
	<i>Buntat</i>
	<i>Bungul</i>
	<i>Kada intai</i>
	<i>Bunyul</i>
	<i>Kada beaki</i>

Compare to others, many words are listed into this category of swearing. Both male and female use words related to brain function to curse. The words listed above are different words of saying stupid or retarded. The only connotation found is the phrase *kada beaki*. The word *aki* means storage battery, while the word *kada* means no. Thus, the phrase *kada beaki* means having no storage battery. Saying someone is *kada beaki* means that the person is stupid.

Insanity

Table 4. Swearing Words under the Category of Insanity

Male	Female
<i>Sinting</i>	<i>Gegilaan</i>
<i>Gila</i>	
<i>Miring</i>	

In contrary to the previous category, the words related to insanity are mostly used by male. Those words mean crazy or insane.

Obscenity

Table 5. Swearing Words under the Category of Obscenity

Male	Female
Lanji (pervert)	<i>Lanji lalu</i> (Pervert)
Kijil (pervert)	<i>Marigat</i> (dirty minded)
Miyang (bitchy)	<i>Baung</i> (Playboy/girl)

Banjarnese use words related to obscenity in cursing. The words used by male or female are mostly related to the action of being pervert or having dirty minded. Both male and female also curse to those who are being player or act like a player though male and female use different words in referring to player. While male would mostly use the word 'miyang' which is closest to the meaning of 'being bitchy', female would most likely prefer the word 'baung' which means 'player'. The word 'miyang' itself is specifically associated with women while the word 'baung' could refer to either playboy or playgirl.

Personality

Table 6. Swearing Words under the Category of Personality

Male	Female
Wala (naughty)	<i>Purici</i> (dirty)
Taguh (stone-headed)	
Beagak (bragging)	

The words in this category are related to person's personality. The word wala in Banjarnese is almost similar to the word "naughty" in English. Further, the word taguh can also be classified into this category. The closest meaning of this word is "being stone-headed". This word is usually used to swear at someone who does not listen others very well. The word beagak can be translated as "the act of bragging" in English. These words are usually used by men. On the other hand, women often use purici to swear. The word carries two meaning. The first one is related to the bad habit of being dirty. Another meaning is having a dirty mind. This word depicts women's role in society. Banjarnese women are usually responsible for any domestic works, including keeping the house clean. Thus, saying someone else is being dirty or not clean might be regarded as a bad word.

Unidentified/uncategorized

Table 7. Unidentified Swearing Words

Male	Female
<i>Utuh guring</i>	<i>Banyau</i> (stinky water)
<i>Bala (disaster)</i>	<i>Kantut</i> (fart)
<i>Unda</i>	<i>Nyawa</i> (you)
<i>Pandir wara (talk bulshit)</i>	<i>Darbul</i>

Due to the limited knowledge, the researchers cannot classified some words. Utuh guring could be translated literally as “sleeping utuh”. Utuh is a name usually used by Banjarnese people to call a boy or a man. However, the researchers fail to figure out the use nor the meaning of these swear.

Taguh (stone headed) has literal meaning which means invulnerable. In Kalimantan society, the magic of being invisible to phisycal attack is suprisingly still exist. However, only a few people who have this kind of magic. As a joke and moaking then people refer another situation of “taguh” as being stone headed. The word “taguh” is also modified into phrase as “taguh di kiau”. Di Kiau means being called by someone. If the word “taguh” is attached into “di kiau”, the meaning is become negative. The meaning becomes that individual is hardly to response others’ calling.

Pandir wara is a response from individual who get irritated to the other speaker act/speech. This response means he/she belief that the other speaker only do bullshit or meaningless speech rather than real action. Meanwhile, Banyau refers to the smell of stinky river/water. In Kalimantan, especially South Kalimantan, the geography of the land is mostly swamp. The smell of swamp is very unique and local people usually call this smell as Banyau. The speaker use the word “banyau” to show dislike to the other speaker. Darbul is not an origin word of Banjarnese language. This word commonly used by teen. So, the researchers fail to define this word.

Lakoff has set a very important ground on the studies of gender. She proposed the prominent feature of women’s speech. Despite the controversies and debate following the publication of these features, it is impossible to deny that the theory has been very influential until now. One of the ten features of women’s speech proposed by Lakoff is the avoidance of strong swear words. While men can speak and use language however they want, women are expected to talk in certain ways, including but not limited to the use of bad words.

However, as each language reflects the culture it belongs to, it also carries the standard and expectations entitled to each gender of the speakers. The standard and expectations might be different from one language to another language. A quite contrastive to Lakoff’s feature of women language, some studies have suggested that Banjarnese women have more freedom to express their opinion and feelings.

Holmes (1995) argued there is a competitiveness among men in conversations while women tend to show their affection and solidarity. However, Lestary (2013) found that both Banjarnese men and women can be either supportive or competitive.

Krismati (2013) also pointed out the lower position and status of Banjarnese women in the society than men have but are still able to express their feelings even to complain. This is supported by Lestary et al. (2016) who mention that Banjarnese women can be the actor of an event besides the object of an action. It shows that in society women also can have power to express and to act their thought and feeling.

Further, the findings above show that swearing is not regarded as taboo by Banjarnese women. Men can curse by using words related to animals, brain function, insanity, and sexuality. Just like men, the words used by women fall into the same categories. In addition, women use name of vegetables to curse, while men do not. The findings of this study confirms the categories of swearing words; some of them involve bodily functions, body parts, sex, and religion (Vingerhoets et al, 2013)

All of words used to swear, men and women tend to use words related to brain function. Some words used by men overlap with the words used by women. If we pay closer attention to these words, it can be seen that women used more different words to curse by using brain function than men.

Similar to the words in this category, women use more varied words to curse by using names of animals. The findings of the study show that the words related to animals used by men and women are different. While men tend to use words like warik (which means monkey) and kambing (which means goat), women tend to use different names referred to dog, such as anjing, and anjret or sounds of barking as in gonggong. Through deeper analysis, it can be seen that women used words which refer to men and their bad traits. The word buaya which is literally translated as crocodile carries another meaning. Crocodile is one of animals used in Indonesian language to represent the act of being playboy. Similar to the word buaya, the word baung, which is a kind of fish, also carries the same meaning. However, this word is specifically used by local Banjarnese.

Further, when it comes to the use of words expressing obscenity, both men and women tend to use similar words, which are 'kijil' and 'lanji'. However, men and women use different words to refer to the act of being player. While men tend to swear using the word of 'miyang' which is closest to the meaning of being bitchy, the other gender use the word 'baung' which is closest to the meaning of being player. The former word refers to the act done by women, while the latter can be referred to both gender.

Based on the findings, the researchers also noticed that men used the words related to insanity more than women. On the other hand, women use word related to vegetables to curse. They use the word of 'Waluh' in Banjarnese which means pumpkin in English. This word is not listed as common words used by men, nor other words in the same category. The role of women in Banjarnese society might be the reason why the word is more familiar for women to curse instead of men. Despite the fact that women, as much as men, are quite

free to express their feeling and emotion, Banjarnese women are still bound to certain submissive role, such as doing domestic works. They are still expected to fulfill the role of good wife/mother/daughter by doing some house works, including cooking. Thus, the word 'waluh' is used mostly by women instead of men.

The findings of this study, yet, are quite the contrary of another study. Jay (2000) in Vingerhoets et al (2013) suggested that men know and use more swear words than women. As it can be seen from the words listed above, Banjarnese women use more swear words than men. Nevertheless, a deeper investigation is needed to clarify either Banjarnese men swear more often than women or the other way around.

Conclusion

This research shows that Banjarnese female use as many swearing words as male. This means that either men or women are free to use swearing words as they converse. Although, perhaps, still Banjarnese women have certain boundaries and limitation of where and when they can swear. This assumption, however, requires further investigation.

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