

TABOO WORDS AND THEIR FUNCTIONS IN THE *BAD BOYS FOR LIFE* MOVIE

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ABSTRACT

This research purposed to find out the types of taboo words and to describe the functions of the taboo words used in the Bad Boys For Life movie by Adil and Bilall. This Research used two theories, the theory from Battistella (2005) for analyzing the types of taboo words and the theory from Jay' (1992) for analyzing the function of taboo words. The qualitative analysis method was used in this research. The result of the research showed that there were 4 types of taboo words that had been found. There were 193 data found in Bad Boys For Life movie namely: 10 data of Epithets, 21 Data of Profanity, 30 data of Vulgarity, and 132 data of Obscenity. For the function of taboo words, there were also 193 data were found, namely: 82 data of Anger and/or Frustration, 53 data of Descriptive – Evaluative, 5 data of Joking, 19 data of Surprise, and 34 data of Sarcastic Irony or Insults

Keywords: *Taboo Words, Types, Functions, Bad Boys For Life, Movie.*

INTRODUCTION

Language is one of the most important thing in human life. Language is used by human to communicate with others. Language serves a variety of purposes. The speech is usually adjusted to fit the social context of speaking. When someone says something nice and polite, the other person will respond in kind. People, on the other hand, sometimes make a mistake by speaking words for bad language, which is actually inappropriate when it is uttered. However, some people use bad words when doing certain activities, such as conversing with friends that they believe as close friends. Bad words are also known as taboo words.

Taboo words are terms that are prohibited to use because they are used to insult and hurt others. Taboo words has been explained by many experts. According to (Shawn, 2005) stated that many languages have words which are considered dangerous holy, magic or shocking, and which are only used in

certain situations or by certain people. Furthermore, it can be said that language is used to avoid saying something that is considered immoral and unworthy to say in certain things.

A taboo inspires some combination of fear and awe, mostly awe in case of taboo is prohibition or avoidance in any society of behavior believed to be harmful to its members. It would cause those members anxiety, embarrassment, or shame (Wolf, 2014).

There must be a reason why people say taboo words, whether they are educated or not. Some people don't say taboo words just for the sake of saying them. Even educated people use taboo words. They use taboo words for a variety of reasons, including attracting others' attention or expressing contempt. Taboo is a word that is not to be used at least in polite society (Fromkin, 2005 p.576).

This research uses a movie entitled *Bad Boys For Life* as the source of data research because this movie is a movie that contains a lot of taboo

words. *Bad Boys For Life* is a 2020 American buddy cop action comedy movie directed by Adil & Bilal. The writer chooses this topic because it is commonly assumed that taboo words are only used by lower-class educational circles, and that taboo words are also included in words that are not permitted to be spoken in public. The writer wants to help people understand taboo words better. This research looked into different types of taboos, as well as the forms and motivations for using English taboos.

There are 3 previous researches that related to this research, 2 of them have the same theory used to analyze the data, and 1 of them has the same source of data but the theory used to analyze the data was different from this research. Those researches are as follows: the first research had been conducted by Fika Nur Anggita (2015) entitled *Sociolinguistic Analysis of Taboo Words in Bad Teacher Movie* from Yogyakarta State University. The second research had been conducted by Putri Aditya Utami (2021) entitled *An Analysis of Taboo Words in Deadpool Movie* from Gunadarma University. The third research had been conducted by Dicky Setiawan (2020) entitled *English Swear Words used in "Bad Boys For Life" Movie* from Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta.

The similarities of this research with those research are the source of data and the theory used. 2 of the previous researches used different sources of data, that is "*Bad Teacher*" movie and "*Deadpool*" movie. And the difference with the third research is the theory used to analyze the data. Dicky Setiawan's research used the theory of Anderson and Trudgill (1992) and Anderson and Trudgill (in Kajarlainen, 2002:24) while the writer's research used the theory of Battistella (2005,

p.72) and Jay (1992, p.63) to analyzed the data.

From the explanation above, it concludes that taboo is always related to something impolite in society which can have a negative effect on others. It would cause those members anxiety, embarrassment, or shame. The usage of taboo words can lead to a misunderstanding in a conversation because it is used by people to make others feel uneasy, sad, humiliated, or ashamed.

This research used the theory from Battistella (2005) to find out the types of taboo words used in the *Bad Boys For Life* movie and the theory from Jay (1992) to analyze the functions of the taboo words used in the *Bad Boys For Life* movie. There are four types of taboo words, as follows: the first is Epithet. **Epithet** is a word or expression that contains a variety of slurs, such as racial slurs, ethnic slurs, gender slurs, sexual slurs, one's appearance, and disabilities such as *nigger* and *motherfucker*. Some words that belong to this type are *bitch*, *nigger*, *faggot*, *retard*, *motherfucker*, *tit-man*, etc. The second is Profanity. **Profanity** is a concept that refers to religious terms or expressions in a secular context in order to demonize God or anything affiliated with a religion. Battistella (2005) stated that "profanity" is religious cursing. Some words that belong to this type are *hell*, *Jesus Christus*, *goddamn*, etc. The third is Vulgarity. **Vulgarity** type is a term or expression that loosely describes sexual anatomy and excretory function. It refers to the language that is frequently used by a person who is uneducated or from a lower social class. Some words that belong to this type are *tit*, *dick*, *ass*, *cock*, etc. The last is Obscenity. **Obscenity** refers to words that are not permitted to be used in public. It is seen as lacking in morals or revolting to morality because it contains

scatological references to the body or body function or sexual activity which can generate disgusting senses. Some words that belong to this type are *fuck*, *shit*, etc.

Besides that, there are 5 functions of taboo words according to Jay (1992), they are: First, Anger, and/or Frustration. **Anger and or Frustration** is combined due to the difficulty in distinguishing these emotions by language alone. An example of anger-frustration was when a football player kicks the ball towards the enemy's goal, but unfortunately, the ball doesn't go into the goal but hits the goalpost until the ball goes out of the field and responded, *what the fuck*. Interestingly, the word *fuck* was used exclusively to express anger or frustration. The second is Descriptive – Evaluative. **Descriptive Evaluative** is used to show how speakers described the objects and events around them connotatively or denotatively. *This game sucks* is an evaluation of the football game; while *“my shoes are shitty”* is a denotative description after stepping in dog feces. Taboo words also intensify descriptions, for example, he beat the hell out of him indicating the level of physical energy used in the fight. The third is Joking. Joking is utilized for formal joke frames and the use of taboo words in humor. To make jokes and stories as humorous as possible, obscenities were occasionally added. Commonly used words were *dick*, *gay*, and *penis*. The majority of these jokes either referred to body parts or processes related to sexual behavior (*ass*, *balls*, *boobs*, *erection*, *hump*, *gay*, and *wacking off*). The fourth is Surprise. **Surprise** is a reaction to an unexpected achievement, loss, or other behavior. Surprises usages are typical of expletives and frequently include religious phrases, for example, *Jesus!* or *oh God*. The last is Sarcastic Irony or Insults. **Sarcastic Irony or Insults**

includes disparaging terms and descriptions, such as *“you fag”* or *“scum face”*. Insults served the purpose of designating negative attributes of the target, whether these were actual or imagined by the speaker, rather than simply expressing displeasure about the speaker's past.

RESEARCH METHOD

To figure out the result of the research's problem, the research uses a qualitative method. According to (Kumar, 2011) the purpose of qualitative research is to describe a situation, phenomenon, problem, or event. Qualitative research usually used descriptive or narrative statements. This research uses the qualitative method since the data are in the form of dialogues that contain taboo words. Moreover, since the topic of this research is taboo words so it cannot be described numerically.

The source of data for this research is the movie entitled *Bad Boys For Life*. The movie was released in the United States on January 17, 2020, by Sony Pictures Releasing under the Columbia Pictures label with a duration of 124 minutes.

The following are the steps in collecting the data, first, watch the *Bad Boys For Life* movie and read the subtitle twice or more to know the plot of the movie, and to know the taboo words that consist in the movie. Then, take notes of all the scenes in the *Bad Boys For Life* movie that contains taboo words to remember the scenes that contain taboo words that will be analyzed. After that classify the taboo words that appear in the *Bad Boys For Life* movie by using Battistella's theory to know the types of taboo words and Jay's theory to find the functions of the taboo words.

After collecting the data, the steps in analyzing the data are: present the data in the form of dialogue. Then

analyze the types of taboo words found in the dialogues based on Battistella's theory. After analyzing the types of taboo words, the next step is to find out the functions of taboo words in each utterance and each type of taboo word from the dialogues based on Jay's theory. After that draw conclusion based on the findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The result of the analysis showed that there are four types of taboo words that were found in the *Bad Boys For Life* movie, namely Epithets, Profanity, Vulgarity, and Obscenity. There are also found the functions of taboo words that were found in the *Bad Boys For Life* movie, namely Anger and/or frustration, Descriptive – Evaluative, Joking, Surprise, and Sarcastic Irony or Insults. The followings are the analysis of the data. The data are analyzed based on the dialogues that appears between the characters.

Epithets (Minutes 00:03:05 – 00:03:08)

*Detective Mike: Hey, even the Batmobile doesn't hold the road like this **bitch**.*

In this scene, Detective Mike used the taboo words “bitch” to express his arrogance in his driving backwards skills while he was chased by the police. Since the word is uttered with his arrogance, it becomes emotional language. Therefore, Detective Mike used the word bitch as a swearing word, as an expression to insult the police.

The word “**bitch**” refers to epithets from types of taboo words. In this movie, the word “**bitch**” that Detective Mike said used to insult the cops for chasing him. Bitch is included in taboo words caused of it is a part of sexuality in literal. The swear word which is related to sexuality is included in Epithets (Battistella, 2005).

Profanity (Minutes 00:01:15 – 00:01:18)

*Detective Marcus: Mike! What the **hell** are you doing?*

Detective Mike: It's called driving, Marcus.

In this conversation, Detective Marcus uses the tabo word “**hell**” when he talked to Detective Mike because Detective Mike drives the car dangerously by speeding and twisting. The word “**hell**” from Detective Marcus is a form of his anger because of what Detective Mie did.

Hell is a place believed to be the home of wicked people after death in literal meaning. It can e categorized as religious cursing (Battistella, 2005). If that word is used in public, it can be ambiguous for somebody who does not understand the meaning of that phrase.

Vulgarity (Minutes 01:05:42 – 01:05:47)

Detective Mike: You benched a 10-year-old in the championship?

*Detective Marcus: Yeah. Little fucker called me a **dickhead**.*

The dialogue above occurred when Detective Marcus talked about his basketball championship experience. Detective Marcus told about a kid that called him “**dickhead**”. The word “**dickhead**” is a brutal rude word to say to other people, especially when it is spoken to others who are older than us. The word “**dickhead**” was categorized as vulgarity because it refers to the object of sexuality. It can be considered a taboo that is not allowed if it is spoken in a formal situation.

Obscenity (Minutes 00:02:11 – 00:02:13)

Detective Mike: Where are your glasses? You need to put your glasses on.

Detective Marcus: I don't need glasses.

*Detective Mike: Marcus, you can't see **shit**.*

The dialogue between Detective Mike and Detective Marcus above

contains Obscenity type because Detective Mike uttered the word “**shit**”. The word “**shit**” is a vernacular word of English that means feces. In this conversation, the word “**shit**” is used to express insult because the dialogue occurred when Detective Mike knew that Detective Marcus needed his glasses to see things clearly because Detective Marcus had myopia. Obscenity refers to expressions that are prohibited from public use since they involve repulsion to the sense, abhorrent, impolite and detestable to morality such as “**fuck**” and “**shit**” (Battistella, 2005).

The Functions of Taboo Words

Anger and/or Frustration (Minutes 00:33:19 – 00:33:32)

*Manny: Yo, this ain't no **fucking** cop shit, man! What happened about reading my rights? This is not how it's supposed to go. You're supposed to ask me questions, and then I tell you, “go **fuck** yourself!”. What the **fuck**, man?*

The function of the word “**fuck**” here is categorized as anger and/or frustration. In this scene, Detective Mike is about to get information from Manny. Instead of asking him questions, Detective Mike suddenly hit Manny, cuffed his hand to a table, and tortured him with a hammer. Manny gets mad and the word “**fuck**” is uttered by Manny as an expression of his anger.

Descriptive – Evaluative (Minutes 01:27:35 – 01:28:05)

Detective Mike: That woman... was a stone-cold killer. So I had to put the woman I love behind bars for the rest of her life. Chose the badge, and I've been choosing it ever since.

Detective Marcus: Mike, you fucked a married witch?

*Detective Mike: So all the **shit** I just said, and that was your takeaway?*

This scene occurred when Detective Mike told Detective Marcus about the drug cartel they are hunting, who turns out to be someone from Detective Mike's past whom he once loved.

The function of the word “**shit**” here is categorized as descriptive – evaluative because the word “**shit**” here describes something that connotatively refers to what Detective Mike told about the drug cartel woman, but Detective Marcus only mentioned about Detective Mike slept with that woman which made Detective Mike uttered the word “**shit**” which refers to what he told before about the drug cartel woman.

Joking (Minutes 00:47:44 – 0:47:57)

*Detective Mike: If you wanted to, just do the speed limit. You let a Prius pass us. And what is that? What, you got your **balls** tucked up in there?*

The function of the word “**balls**” uttered by Detective Mike here was categorized as a joke because, in this scene, Detective Mike was talking about the bags that Detective Mike brought. In this case, Detective Mike made a joke about why Detective Mike brought so many bags by saying “You got your **balls** tucked up in there?”. The word “**balls**” actually refers to a male part, but Detective Mike said it for humor. Therefore the function of the word **balls** is for joking.

Surprise (Minutes 00:13:06 – 00:13:10)

*Captain Rita: Oh, my **God**, the ears!*

Detective Marcus: Yeah, my grandbaby. That's my grandbaby.

This scene occurred when Detective Marcus showed his grandbaby photo to Captain Rita. When Captain Rita looked at the photo, she suddenly said “Oh, my **God**, the ears!”. The function of the word “**God**” in this scene is categorized as a surprise because this word is used by Captain

Rita to express how she was surprised by how cute is th baby.

Sarcastic Irony or Insults (Minutes 00:48:19 – 00:48:27)

Detective Mike: Carver is scared. He is not gonna wait, man.

Detective Marcus: It's on the way, Mike.

Detective Mike: And what's the person that shot me want with a snitch like Carver Rem anyway?

*Detective Marcus: I'm taking you to find out, **motherfucker**.*

The function of the word “**mothercuker**” here is categorized as irony or insults. In this scene, Detective Marcus and Detective Mike were arguing about a murder in the case they were investigating about. The word “**mothercuker**” is uttered by Detective Marcus as an insult to Detective Mike, therefore the function of the use of the taboo word “**motherfucker**” is sarcastic irony or insults.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

After analyzing the taboo words in *Bad Boys For Life* movie based on Battistella's theory, it is found that the types of taboo words that appeared in the movie are Epithets, Profanity, Vulgarity, and Obscenity. There are 193 data found from the *Bad Boys For Life* movie. The types of taboo words used are: 10 data of Epithets, 21 data of Profanity, 30 data of Vulgarity, and 132 data of Obscenity. There are also 193 data found of the function of taboo words from the *Bad Boys for Life* movie. The functions of taboo words used are: 82 data of Anger and/or Frustration, 53 data of Descriptive – Evaluative, 5 Data of Joking, 19 data of Surprise, and 34 data of Sarcastic Irony or Insults.

Based on the results and discussion of this research, there are some suggestions that intends to convey. It is hoped that this research can be used as a reference for future research by other researchers, despite the fact that this research is still lacking in good words. Other researchers can also use other theories or concepts to analyze this movie, such as subtitle strategies, characterization, semiotics, and so on. Hopefully, this research will be useful for further learning and the information gleaned from this research can be applied in everyday life.

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