The Function and Meaning of Using Indonesian People's Swearing in Cross-Cultural Studies: A Literature Review

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Abstract: Various activities of the Indonesian people always involve language, with the language being able to express opinions, desires, and others. The use of regional languages in daily conversation cannot be controlled, including swear words. The use of swearing has a negative impact on politeness, which is practiced in different cultures. This study aims to determine the function and meaning of swearing by the Indonesian people. This research used the literature study method. The results of the review suggest that Indonesian people understand the use of swearing will have different functions and meanings if done differently in conversations or virtual conversations. The use of swearing in virtual conversations such as social media tends to lead to misunderstandings and insults. Oaths are often distorted in meaning because of the lack of facial expressions and the tone of voice in direct conversation will be clearer to others. The function and meaning of swearing are not only determined by the proportionality of their contents but also by feelings in certain situations. To enrich another knowledge about the functions and meanings of the use of adolescent swear words, the researcher recommends for further research to review expatriate conflict styles.

1 INTRODUCTION

Language is a communication tool for humans, and human languages cannot communicate with each other. This shows that language has an important function in human life. Karl Buhler explained several functions of language into six parts, namely language as a tool for expression, providing information, vocative, aesthetic, fatigue, and multilingual. Swear words that often appear when communicating are an example of the function of language in expressing the feelings of the speaker to the listener.

Swearing is part of hate speech. Although it is common, swearing has remained a taboo and was considered incompatible with Indonesian social norms. When a conversation takes place, swearing is frequently used as a compliment. In conversation, often swear words are inserted as a complement to other words, but this is considered rude because it should be when speaking that it is better to give a good impression on the interlocutor. Swear words have a unique communicative function that allows individuals to express and emphasize their emotional state (Wang, 2013). Swearing is typically used in casual conversations to express feelings and vent emotions. In their development, swear words, in addition to being spoken to express the emotion of anger, are also used as expressions of others' emotions, such as disappointment, amazement, surprise, praise, and insult. Swear words also serve as a form of greeting and joke among people with whom you have an intimate relationship. To show an expression of anger, hate, or surprise, people usually use the word "swear," because the swear word can be used to express any of those emotions. Related to this exposure, there is one situation in the interaction that is annoying or makes the heart angry, so the speaker of swear words sometimes uses various expressions to express anger, annoyance, disappointment, displeasure, or even hatred towards a thing, condition, situation, or event that he is experiencing. Swear words are frequently used to hurt someone's feelings if they are used during an emotional state.

Swearing is defined as the use of taboo language that conveys connotative information (Jay and Janschewitz, 2008). Swearing is a psychological and socio-cultural phenomenon and has been studied in relation to areas such as health, personality, and

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gender differences (Jay, 2009). Swear words are not only often taught by Indonesians, but also taught by foreign people. In the United States, swearing is common and develops early. By the age of 2, children have been swearing in their vocabulary, by school age the vocabulary already consists of about 30 to 40 swear words, and in the preteen period the swear words known and used by children become more like adults (Jay & Janschewitz, 2012). Therefore, swearing can be used to draw attention to a problem, confront others, express social hierarchies, and even provide a sense of attachment (Jay & Janschewitz, 2012). The use of swear words can be influenced by various factors, environmental actors are one of the most important factors in influencing a person to use the word. The use of swear words has pros and cons opinion from the Indonesian people because it is considered taboo and disrespectful in its use, which has a variety of expressions in it.

Research on swearing in Indonesia is quite popular among social science researchers, especially in the field of psychology. This is shown from search results from the Google Scholar database, which show the number of 1,440 publications in the last 5 years (2017–2022) with the theme of swearing. Swear words are also a concern for various parties such as KPAI (the Indonesian Child Protection Commission) and language experts because the use of swear words is being discussed in Indonesia. Based on these problems, the author conducted research on the function and meaning of the use of swear words in Indonesian society in cross-cultural studies; this study uses literature review studies.

2 METHODS

This research uses a literature review approach. A literature review is a method used to understand a research theme comprehensively. By conducting research on the theme of swearing in Indonesia, an understanding of the function and meaning of swearing in Indonesian society can be obtained. Therefore, this research will be able to provide an overview of research themes that still need deeper study. Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate the pattern of scientific research in Indonesia to determine the direction of future studies. The literature review guidelines used are PRISMA, and the databases used in this study are Google Scholar, EBSCO, and SAGE Journals. The criteria for searching this research database use research articles from 2017–2022 by using swear keywords (swearing, cross-cultural, and psychology) in looking for relevant articles in this study. This research is the initial stage to find a deeper pattern of swearing function and meaning research in Indonesian society. This research will be continued with a systematic literature review in a more specific context in the future so that conclusions about the function and meaning in Indonesian society can be considered to have an impact on various fields, not only in the field of research.

3 RESULTS

The author predicts that Indonesians understand that the use of swearing will have different functions and meanings if done differently in conversations or virtual conversations. The use of swearing in virtual conversations such as those on social media tends to lead to misunderstandings and insults. Researchers also predicted that targets who swear would be rated higher in the credibility dimension than those who did not swear and that this effect would be greater for men than for female targets, due to the masculine perception of swearing. Finally, researchers predicted that the target men who swore would be rated higher on the power dimension and would be more attractive than the female target.

Table 1: Definition of swearing.

Andang and Bram (2018)	Stapleton (2020)	Stephens and Robertson (2020)	Shakiba & Stapleton (2022)
The use of swear words is linked to emotional reactions in speakers.	Swearing on social media can be analyzed to determine swearing patterns and other people's perceptions when receiving the swearing. Swearing is proven to influence the perceptions of other people towards those who say it.	Swearing while reducing pain extends to dealing with emotional arousal and health disorders. The dependent variables in this study were emotional level, humor level, distraction level, cold pressor pain	Situational, psychological, and cross-cultural factors can all affect how profanity is used.

		threshold, cold pressor pain tolerance, pain perception score, and changes in heart rate.	
In everyday conversation, using swear words causes embarrassment for the speakers of the swear words.	Swearing offenders are considered to have lower intelligence, a lower social class, and a younger age group.	It was not found that any disturbance involved in the swearing mechanism reduced pain.	Gender and personality have an impact on the swear words that Persian immigrants who speak Persian and English as a second language choose to use.
Swear words have no negative effect	Swear words are generated spontaneously by speakers in the context of their own impressions and meanings.	Swear words had no positive effects	The frequency of swearing is positively correlated with self-rated cultural sensitivity and knowledge.
Cultural knowledge is useful in choosing the right language in conversation, swear words have more access to culture and lifestyle.			

4 DISCUSSIONS

This study contributes to the psychological literature on swearing. The purpose of this study is to find out the function and meaning of the use of swearing by Indonesians in cross-cultural studies. To investigate this, researchers included the genders of participants in the analysis of this study. Lakic men use more swear words than women (Wang et al., 2014). Swear words are more strongly associated with masculinity and softer swear words with femininity (Rasmussen and Moely, 1986). It was found that, for most assessments, using neutral language provided an advantage over swearing, and women were rated higher than men; however, some interactions with the sex of participants added to the complexity of our findings. Results for impressions formed from the attractiveness, professionalism, and credibility of the target are discussed below.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The gender of the speaker and differences across cultures influence the utterance of swear words; there is no effect of swear words on sociability. For male and female speakers in mixed-gender couples, when both swear they look less sociable than same-sex couples, This could be because it is more socially acceptable to use such language with peers of the same sex than with mixed-sex couples. The results of this study provide evidence that profanities causes are not limited by the sex differences of the speaker. Previous research found similar results: there were differences in the use of swear words between sex, but these were influenced by the cross-cultural nature of Indonesian society.

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