

Swear Words and Solidarity in Ampenan Communities

Baiq Anita Rahmi

Mataram University

Mataram, Indonesia

Baiq.anita100@gmail.com

Abstract— This research was intended to analyze the sociolinguistic phenomenon in Ampenan communities. This research focused on what types of swearwords Ampenan communities used to use, in what context they do swearing and the implication in their social relationship within the communities. This study uses a qualitative descriptive method followed by ethnography analysis where the data of this study were gathered through the observation and descriptive analysis of the transcript conversation of Ampenan communities taken from tape-recording. This research found out that swearing could be divided into several types such as Animal references, Sexual references, Religious profane, scatological or disgusting object, and personal background in various contexts. Moreover, this study discovered that swearwords were linked with solidarity and social relationship among interlocutors from different ethnics in Ampenan communities who share the same meaning and understanding among others. Furthermore, this research hoped to be beneficial for the reader in giving some understandings and new horizon about swearwords in multicultural communities.

Keywords— *swearwords; solidarity; Ampenan; multicultural communities*

I. INTRODUCTION

Each person was born with a different nation, race, ethnic, costume, group, and religion, which make them different in the way they produce and use the language. People should be aware that they socially separated in groups which make them hard to adjust with others. They should realize that conflicts usually appear when someone has a different perspective on understanding language use in daily communication. As like a coin, language also has two sides; they are a good side and bad side. The good side is when we can use the language for the good of human life where a language can bring peace, cut the distance among people, build solidarity and strengthen the relationship among human. The other side is when a language can be a sharp knife which sometimes harmful or hurts someone or a certain group. One common way people do to harass or insults others is by swearing at them. Swearing is known as the way people utter some words to express anger, disappointment, emotion and almost all of the negative things in words. At this point, we might conclude that swear word should be avoided, and people who used to use swear words only give a harmful effect to the hearer.

On the other hand, there is a controversial fact which reveals that swear words are not only harmful, but it also gives a positive contribution to a social context. Beers Fägersten, K. (2007) in her research on the relationship between swear word usage and social context found that there is a “swearing paradox” where the results show that there are some different swearing offensiveness rating tasks depend on types of swearing within communities. This research proves that swear words might not always be destructive in a social context depends on types of swearing, to whom they swear, and in what event or context they swearing at.

Those language facts make learning a language is a challenging activity as it has various unique things to be researched. Since there is various kind of human language, a language also contains the essence of human nature like culture and identity. In other words, we can easily recognize people culture, identity, and social status from their language. In this occasion, this research will discover fascinating phenomenon about how groups of people from different ethnic, identity, and linguistic backgrounds were uniting as one viewed from the linguistic aspect.

Furthermore, Ampenan communities selected as our object of research which is special by its multi-ethnicity. Yusra (2012) described Ampenan as a city of multicultural ethnic groups consists of Sasak, Bugis, Banjar, Malay, Arabic, Balinese, and Chinese. This research is worth to be discussed and shared with other people to make us realize that harmony can be grown within the differences with the language. Moreover, this research will highlight how people with their variety of linguistic background build their relationship with language and how to swear word in which some people avoid to use affect the solidarity in multicultural linguistic groups in Ampenan communities. Based on the condition above this study will reveal what types of swearwords commonly used, in what context and the implication on solidarity among interlocutors from different ethnics in Ampenan communities.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *Language and multicultural society in Ampenan*

Ampenan is one of the cities in the western part of Lombok which is included as one of JKPI (Jaringan Kota Pusaka Indonesia) or historical Heritage town in Indonesia. Ampenan was built in 1924 by Deutch in the colonial era and become one of the cities with the busiest trading port in Lombok. This city had one of the large and vital harbours in Lombok at the time. A lot of trader from various race and backgrounds were met in Ampenan for trading activities until 1973 because after that the harbour for crossing and transportation in Lombok were transferred to Lembar harbor. This history is one of the reasons why Ampenan can be a multicultural city until nowadays. The footprints of an ex harbor city were shown by how groups of Ampenan people named their small districts by their origin as Kampung Tionghoa for those who are Chinese, Kampung Arab for Arabians, Kampung Bugis for business, Kampung Melayu for Malays, Kampung Jawa for Javanese, Kampung Bali for Balinese, and Kampung Banjar for Banjarnese.

Yusra (2012) described that ethnic composition, multicultural practices, and representative forms of multicultural awareness were some aspects that provide evidence of multiculturalism in Ampenan. In ethnic composition, he found that Ampenan communities consist of various ethnic composition such as; Sasaks (71.07%), Arabs (16.23%), and the rest (11.63%) from Chinese, Buginese, Malays, Balinese, and Banjarnese. Meanwhile, the other (1.07%) is from other parts of Indonesia. There is assimilation among groups in contact situation that generate an adaptation in communities which constructs a new perspective about language use, style, and meaning in a multicultural society.

B. *Swearwords*

Swear words commonly known as a group of impolite words that human should avoid in communication. As stated by Swan (1995:575), somehow swear words can be one of taboo where it is a powerful language that uttered by someone to burst the emotion within the language. Hagen (2013) in her research, described that the neurological system, psychological system, and cultural context were three components that cause someone to swear. Since it is linked with someone's emotions, these swear words should be fully considerate before used to avoid the inappropriate use that may cause conflicts in society. As Hudson (1980) also highlight:

There is a very powerful convention which says that certain words, such as 'shit', ought never to be used, and many people know these words but observe the convention to the extent that from birth to death they never say them (not even to report that their children have said them) - a truly amazing fact, seen objectively (Hudson 1980: 53).

It is common that every culture has their own swear words because swear words generally affected by culture and languages. Furthermore, swear words have numerous functions and characteristics. Jay (2009) described some features of swearwords, such as:

- a) Sexual references (fuck),
- b) Profane or blasphemous words (Goddamn),
- c) Scatological or disgusting objects (shit),
- d) Animal names mentioning (pig),
- e) Ethnic/ racial/ gender slurs (nigger),
- f) Ancestral allusions (bastard),
- g) Substandard vulgar term and
- h) Offensive Slang.

Moreover, R Hirsch (1985) arranged taxonomy of swearing for further researcher basis in conducting a cross-cultural comparative study of swearing. He formulates the function categories of swearing into five functions. Those are; a) Expletive which is usually used when the speaker utters their emotion or hates through the languages. b) Abusive, which is usually used when the speaker purposively abuses or hurt someone's feeling through languages. c) Humoristic which is usually used when the speaker wants to create humour in conversation. d) Euphemistic which is usually used to switch some harsh words that could be unpleasant to hear. Moreover, last is e) Habitual with the condition when the speaker repeatedly swears as a habit.

C. *Solidarity*

In this part, we will be focused on the notion of solidarity since there is a various description of what is solidarity in fields of linguistic means. First of all, study about solidarity started by Brown and Gilman (1960) who studies about the relationship between pronouns and social dimension of power and solidarity. In their study Brown and Gilman (1960) views that solidarity covers various symmetrical relationship among individuals; for example, having a similar habitual disposition, live in the same neighbourhood, speaking and understanding the same language. Moreover, the existence of solidarity itself can be increased by paralleled objectivity and social interaction in which the discursive similarities are co-constructed. Furthermore, we need to realize that solidarity usually found in a social group of people or community. Solidarity appears to indicate someone's distance, intimacy, feelings, and similarity between one to another as stated by Hudson (1984) that solidarity also linked with the range of social distance between the characteristics they shared.

III. METHOD

This research used a qualitative approach followed by ethnography design. The data were taken from the population of Ampenan communities and gathered using purposive samplings. First of all, the observation was conducted to investigate such communicative events followed by tape-recording the events. This observation included in ethnography observation, which was conducted in both participation and non-participation approach.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

After conducting ethnography observation, the study found that there are various swearwords found and commonly used by Ampenan communities as specified in Table I

TABLE I. TYPES SWEARWORDS FOUND IN AMPENAN COMMUNITIES

NO	Types	Example
1	Animal	Acong, Bawi, Godek, kaok, kelape, lejang
2	Sexual references	Pepeq, Leseq, telor, bekarong, ancot
3	Religious profane/blasphesemy	Iblis, setan, selaq
4	Scatological or disgusting objects	Tai, tain tele
5	Racial/mental illness/ personal background	Bedel, bucong, bangak, ngangak, idiot, bodo, gedok, bontet, anak ubek, ubek, jadah, anak jadah, bebinjat, jogang,sundel, weweh

it can be found in their daily interaction in several common speech events such as: greetings, chit-chat, addressing, inviting and refusing.

- 1. Setting* : *Pantai Ampenan (Ampenan beach)*
- Participant* : *a. Abib (AB) b. Panjul (PJ)*
- Events* : *Adressing – inviting*
- Ethnics* : *AB (Arabs) PJ (Sasaks)*
- Relationship* : *Friends*

PJ	“ yaok kelape bunut baik ni mbe jak lain, mangkak tulak lalo leq oneq?”	coackroach bunut baik where are you going, why are you keep divagating ?”	Kelape (animal)	humoristic
AB	” tain tele.. mbe mbe wah, ngumbe ante hot”	tain tele .. wherever i want, what’s your bussines	Tain tele (disgusting object)	Expletive
PJ	” sundel jamak, ngupi ne juluk jadah kesepian saya ini”	sundel , come here jadah, have a sip of coffee, im so lonely	Sundel (Racial/mental illness/ personal background)	Habitual
AB	“ anteh juluk , anter harem ni dulu”	wait a moment, i’ll be there after pick up my girl	-	-

In this dialogue PJ uses swearwords to greet AB by using words “Kelape” which includes in animal types of swearwords, replied by AB using “tain tele” in the first sentence that includes in scatological swearwords. Followed by other swearwords such as “sundel” and “jadah” which are includes in Racial/mental illness/ personal background in addressing someone used by PJ to invite AB to have a sip of coffee together. At the end of the conversation, they decided to hang out. On the other hand, if we back to the logic use of

swearwords AB should not accept PJ's invitation due to his impoliteness in using swearwords. Moreover, swearwords in this context have humorous, expletive, and habitual functions.

2. *Setting* : *Pos ronda (gathering place)*
Participant : *Ikbal (IB), Mansur (MS), hasan (HS)*
Events : *chit-chat – playing chess*
Ethnics : *IB (Malay), MS (Arabs), HS (Bugis)*
Relationship : *neighbour*

MS	" ngangak ente, skakmat dah itu"	"stupid , you got checkmate"	Ngangak (Racial/mental illness/ personal background)	Expletive
IB	" jadah kenapa saya kalah terus sama bucung ini"	"Jadah, why i keep losing with this narrow mouth"	Jadah, bucung (Racial/mental illness/ personal background)	Humoristic
HS	"lasingan , pepek janda itu aja di angenin"	"thats because you keep thinking about that widow's pepek"	Pepek (Sexual references)	Habitual
MS	"Ee godek diem , janda yang mbe ni? Fitnah aja km"	"shut up monkey, which widow ? thats not right"	Godek (Animal)	Habitual

Second dialogues consist of three Ampenan people with different ethnics who gathered in Pos ronda (a common gathering place). We found various types of swearwords such as sexual references, Animal references, and mental illness and personal background references. Next scene is these people keep gathering in pos ronda even after their previous conversation. it means that there is no misunderstanding among them and they share the same thoughts in the speaking context that linked with the swearwords functions in this dialogue such as Expletive, Humoristic and Habitual functions.

3. *Setting* : *Kebon Roek (Ampenan central market)*
Participant : *Nita (NT), Lia (LA), Inak Eli (IE)*
Events : *shopping*
Ethnics : *NT (Sasaks), LA (Banjarnese), IE (sasaks)*
Relationship : *seller-buyer*

NT	"Berapa timunnya bik?"	"how much this cucumber?"	-	-
IE	" lima ribu ambil dah tiga biji"	" three for five thousand"	-	-
LA	"mahalnya bik, lima ribu ambil enam ya"	"Expensive, can i take six for five thousand?"	-	-
IE	" Telor jaran itu mbak bukan timun, masak mau di regak"	"That is horse dick not a cucumber, are you serious keep bargaining?"	Telor jaran (Sexual references)	Humoristic

The third dialogues consist of three people in Kebon Roek org central traditional market in Ampenan conducted by three women. In this conversation found that one of them use swearwords in public in such a shopping event. The seller use swearwords in communicating with the buyer. In this dialogue, swearwords contain humorous functions. From three simple dialogues above we could describe that swearwords especially in Ampenan communities not only contain abusive function. Furthermore, it also contains humorous, habitual, and expletive functions that also affect the distance or intimacy among interlocutors.

V. CONCLUSION

Types of swearwords found in Ampenan communities divided into some types such as Animal, Sexual references, Religious profane/ blasphemy, scatological or disgusting object, and Racial mental illness with personal background. Secondly, swearwords in Ampenan not only used by people in a specific context or special events. Swearwords can be easily found in public uttered by various people, gender and age. If we back through the results and findings we would know that swearwords also linked with humoristic function which can bring happiness that strengthen the relationship and cut the distance among interlocutors who involved in the conversation. moreover, swearwords also appear with its habitual function where some swearwords cannot be called a taboo words anymore which in fact could negatively affect the social distance among communities. Finally, we could say that the use of swearwords sometimes can be beneficial in rising intimacy and stenghten solidarity.

References

- Beers-Fägersten, K. 2007. Saarland working papers in linguistics (SWPL). *Swear word offensiveness*, 1. 14-37.
- Brown, R. & Gilman, A. (1960) *The pronouns of Power and solidarity. Style in language*. Cambridge: MA, MIT Press
- Hagen, S. H. 2013. *Swearwords and attitude change: A sociolinguistic study: University of Bergen, Foreign language department*. Retrieved May, 2019 from <http://hdl.handle.net/1956/7270>
- Hirsch, R. 1985. Perspectives on swearing, University of gothenburg, dept.of linguistics. *Taxonomies of Swearing*, 37-59. Retrieved May, 2019 from <http://liu.divaportal.org/smash/get/diva2:565387/FULLTEXT02.pdf>
- Hudson, R. A. 1980. *Sociolinguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge U. P
- _____. 1984. *Sociolinguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge U. P.
- Jay, T. (2009). Perspectives on psychological science. *The utility and ubiquity of taboo words*, 4(2), 153-16
- Swan, M. 1995. *Practical English Usage*. Oxford: Oxford U. P.
- Yusra, K. 2012. *Language and Social Solidarity*. Mataram: Cerdas Press