

# Classification of Swear Words in Javanese Used by East Java People

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**Abstract**—Swear words relates to types of words used by someone to express their anger. Those words were analyzed in this study using qualitative method. It was used to collect, analyze, and present the result of the study. In addition, the data of this study were collected using interview method with in depth interview, record, and note technique. Then the data were analyzed using descriptive analytic technique with referent theory and writer's intuition as native speaker of Javanese from East Java. Moreover, the presentation of the data used informal method using words. In addition, the aims of this study are finding the classification of swear words. The main result of this study shows that the classification of swear words are categorized based on: (1) anatomical terms like *matamu*, *ndasmu*, *raimu*, and *lambemu*; (2) animal terms like *asu*, *jangkrik*, and *wedus*; (3) kinship terms like *mbahmu* and *kakekanmu*; and (4) *Arekan* dialect like *jancok* and *cok*.

**Keywords**—classification of swear words; East Java people; Javanese language; swearing; referent

## I. INTRODUCTION

Every people has their own way to express their emotion especially expressing their anger. One way to state it is using swear words, and it can be found in our daily life. Swear words can be seen as referring to areas of social or cultural taboo, such as sex or bodily functions (Stapleton, 2010: 289). Areas of social or cultural taboo means that these words are not accepted generously by society. Only some people are brave enough to use it in the public, and their action is classified as swearing. Anderson and Trudgil (2007: 195) suggest that swearing can be defined as language use in which the expression: (1) refers to something taboo or stigmatized, (b) is not to be interpreted literally, and (c) expresses strong emotions or attitudes. Their explanation shows us that swear words can also be said as taboo words, so the use of them in our society is restricted. Then they must not be translated literally because they have non-literal meaning, for example a word *fuck* does not infer *copulate*, but it means *damn* when it is used as swear word. The other examples are taken from Javanese language that is a word *asu* which is not translated as dog, but it can be interpreted as *damn*. Moreover, the use of swear words emphasizes deep feeling of someone which can be said as madness of someone to others.

Swear words or taboo words as a tool to express foolhardiness of people can be found in many societies. Although it is stigmatized, but they can be found easily in our surroundings. One of societies which is used swear words is in Java especially in East Java. People who live there also classified swear words as taboo words which should not be uttered by people. When they pronounce them, they will use high tone, so the swear words sound crude to people who hear them. In East Java, some people are easy to swear especially if they are angry or mad. The swear words which are used by them are various. This numerous classification relate to referent, for example, *jangkrik* (cricket) is a swear word which refers to animal term that is cricket. The other example is *matamu* (your eyes) which refers to anatomical term that is eyes. Those two examples are only a few example of swear words in East Java. In other words, it can be said that there are some classification of swear words based on referent used by people in East Java.

Referent became one approach to classify the swear words in East Java. Danesi (2005: 100) said that there are two kinds of referents that signs encode, concrete and abstract. A concrete referent refers to something real, something that can be seen or touched like animal labelled by the word cricket. In contrary, an abstract referent is a notion which cannot be seen or touched physically like a concept. Furthermore, swear words in East Java were classified based on the result of data analysis using referent. It was chosen because it helped us easily recognize the swear words. Therefore, this study was done focusing on describing the classification of swear words, so other people will know their classification.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Theoretical Description

#### 1) Swear Words

Anderson (1985: 83) stated that potential swear words are words that are “bad” both with regard to their content and their form, viz. In other words, swear words can be said as bad language based on the content and the form. As a bad language, it should not be uttered directly in a society because it may make other people offended.

#### 2) Swearing

Ljung (2011: 5), swearing is one of the many devices that languages offer speakers as a way to give additional emphasis to their speech, often in combination with other emphasizing techniques like stress, intonation, and tone of voice, not to mention non-linguistic phenomena like gestures and facial expression. The point of swearing is on the use of word which is combined to stress, intonation, and tone of voice stated by a speaker. Those combination must appear when a speaker do a swearing. Furthermore, Ljung (2011: 4) explained that swearing contains four criteria: (1) using taboo words, (2) taboo words are used with non-literal meaning, (3) swear words qualifies as formulaic language, (4) and swearing is emotive language. When a person utter a word, and it refers to one of them, then it can be classified as swearing.

#### 3) Referent

Referent or whatever things, event, or situations in the world the language is about (Riemer, 2010: 14). It is a picture of something which is projected by our mind. A referent can be a person, place, animal, and others.

### B. Some Previous Studies

There were some previous study which discussed swear words. The first study was Wijana (2004) who analyzed form and referent of swear words in *bahasa Indonesia*. The results of his study shows that there were various form of referent in *bahasa Indonesia* such as words, phrases, and clauses; and there were some referents of swear words in *bahasa Indonesia* namely mental state or unlucky situation, animals, devils, bad things, parts of human body, kinship terms, sexual activities and profession. The second study was Rathje (2017). She analyzed swearing in Danish children’s television series. There were three findings on her study: (1) the norms for swearwords frequency, swearwords type and interlocutor variables have changed; (2) a change of norms has been observed when it comes to swearing in Danish children series in the last decades; and (3) it was proposed that swearwords are only “the tip of the iceberg” when it comes to the study of aggressive language use in not just children’s television series, but a broader spectrum. The third study was Dewi (2017) who analyzed swear words used by the characters in Jojo Moyes: *Me Before You*. She found twenty five different swear words appear in the novel.

In addition, there are some difference of this study with those three previous. First, the data of this study are Javanese language. Second, this study only uses referent theory to decide the classification of swear words used by people in East Java.

## III. METHOD

This study used qualitative method which were divided into three parts. The first part was data collecting method which used interview method. It means that a researcher did a conversation with respondents (Mahsun, 2012: 250). Moreover, this method was used to collect the data in this study by using three techniques those were in depth interview technique to fifteen respondents, record technique to record parts of interview, and note technique to note all interview parts. The second part was data analysis method which used descriptive analytic and introspection of writer’s intuition as a speaker of Javanese from East Java. All the data which were collected were analyzed using referent theory combining with writer’s intuition. Third, the presentation of the analysis data used informal method. It presents the analysis data using words (Sudaryanto, 1993: 145).

## IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### A. Classification of Swear Words in Javanese used by East Java People




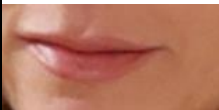
Swear words which are used by East Java people on their daily life can be seen on table 1 below:

TABLE I. CLASSIFICATION OF SWEAR WORDS USED BY EAST JAVA PEOPLE

No	Swear Words
1	Matamu
2	Ndasmu
3	Raimu
4	Lambemu
5	Asu
6	Jangkrik
7	Wedus
8	Mbahmu
9	Kakekanmu
10	Jancok
11	Cok

On table 1, there are eleven swear words used by people in East Java. Each referent of swear words is different, and it is explained using pictures which was taken from *Google*. Swear words number one to four refer to anatomical terms which have different referent. Those referents can be seen on table 2 below:

TABLE II. REFERENTS OF SWEAR WORDS USED BY EAST JAVA PEOPLE




No	Swear Words	Referent
1	Matamu	
2	Ndasmu	
3	Raimu	
4	Lambemu	

On table 2, each swear word has different referents, but they refer to anatomical terms generally, so their classification can be categorized as anatomical terms. The referents' description of four swear words on table 2 were taken from *Oxford Learner's Pocket Dictionary Fourth Edition*. They are: (1) *matamu* (your eyes), the description of referent *matamu* refers to eye that is either of the two organs of sight (2011: 157); (2) *ndasmu* (your head), the description of referent *ndasmu* refers to head that is part

of the body that contains the eyes, nose, brain etc (2011: 204); (3) *raimu* (your face), the description of referent *raimu* refers to face that is front part of the head (2011: 157); and (4) *lambemu* (your mouth), the description of referent *lambemu* refers to mouth that is opening in the face used for speaking, eating, etc (2011: 287). In addition, there are one uniqueness of swear words on table 2, their classification is usually in the form of a noun phrase which is always followed by possessive word- *mu*.

Swear words number five to seven refer to animal terms which have different referent. Those referents can be seen on table 3 below:



TABLE III. REFERENTS OF SWEAR WORDS USED BY EAST JAVA PEOPLE

No	Swear Words	Referent
5	<i>Asu</i>	
6	<i>Jangkrik</i>	
7	<i>Wedus</i>	

On table 3, each swear word has different referents, but they refer to animal terms generally, so their classification can be categorized as animal terms. The referents' description of three swear words on table 3 were taken from *Oxford Learner's Pocket Dictionary Fourth Edition*. They are: (5) *asu* (dog) - common animal kept by people for hunting, guarding, etc or as a pet (2011: 132); (6) *jangkrik* (cricket) – small brown jumping insect that makes a shrill noise (2011: 104); and (7) *wedus* (goat) –small horned animal with long hair that lives in mountain areas (2011: 190).

Swear words number eight to nine refer to kinship terms which have different referent. Those referents can be seen on table 4 below:

TABLE IV. REFERENTS OF SWEAR WORDS USED BY EAST JAVA PEOPLE

No	Swear Words	Referent
8	<i>Mbahmu</i>	 
9	<i>Kakekanmu</i>	

On table 4, each swear word has different referents, but they refer to kinship terms generally, so their classification can be categorized as kinship terms. The referents' description of two swear words on table 4 were taken from *Oxford Learner's Pocket*

*Dictionary Fourth Edition*. They are: (8) *mbahmu* (your grandmother or your grandfather), the description of referent *mbahmu* refers to grandmother or grandfather that are father or mother of either of your parents (2011: 193); and (9) *kakekanmu* which refers to grandfather- father of either of your parents (2011: 193).

While classification of swear words number ten to eleven is *arekan* dialect. It is a dialect which is used by East Java people especially people from Lamongan, Gresik, Surabaya, and Sidoarjo. Those swear words do not have referent because *jancok* and *cok* cannot be referred to something real or unreal. Moreover, classification of swear words from table 1 can be seen on table 5 below:

TABLE V. CLASSIFICATION OF SWEAR WORDS USED BY PEOPLE IN EAST JAVA

No	Swear Words	Classification			
		Anatomical Term	Animal Term	Kinship Terms	<i>Arekan</i> Dialect
1	<i>Matamu</i>	√			
2	<i>Ndasmu</i>	√			
3	<i>Raimu</i>	√			
4	<i>Lambemu</i>	√			
5	<i>Asu</i>		√		
6	<i>Jangkrik</i>		√		
7	<i>Wedus</i>		√		
8	<i>Mbahmu</i>			√	
9	<i>Kakekanmu</i>			√	
10	<i>Jancok</i>				√
11	<i>Cok</i>				√

## V. CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that there are four classification of swear words used by people in East Java. They are (1) anatomical terms like *matamu*, *ndasmu*, *raimu*, and *lambemu*; (2) animal terms like *asu*, *jangkrik*, and *wedus*; (3) kinship terms like *mbahmu* and *kakekanmu*; and (4) *Arekan* dialect like *jancok* and *cok*. Classification number one to three have referent while classification number four do not have referent because those swear words are terms which are used by people in East Java to swear and to call people who have close relationship. Those swear words can be called as swear word only if they are used using high intonation.

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