

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

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#### 1.1 Background of the Study

In everyday life, people use language to express ideas, emotions and desires. They use language to communicate with other members of their society. Since the society itself consists of various people with various social backgrounds there are many ways to use the language in society. Wardhaugh (1986:226) states that sometimes language is used to avoid saying certain things. He goes on saying that people do not talk about 'certain things', taboos, because they do not want to talk about them. To be more specific, people do not want to use taboo words in daily conversations because of many reasons such as status, age, sex, even because of the society where they live. There are many societies that do not allow their members to employ taboo words and if one of the members insists on using taboo words the society will give some kind of penalties or punishments.

Nowadays, the use of taboo words in society becomes an interesting phenomenon of the language because of different perceptions toward the use of taboo words from one generation to another generation. Taboo words used to be 'forbidden words' and people that use such words were considered as talking dirty just as the use of the word 'damn' in the movie "Gone with the Wind" which aroused

widespread public comment (Wardhaugh, 1986:230). However, today's standard and norms in society have changed. In a certain society the use of taboo words is quite acceptable. The society allows its members to use taboo words freely without any punishments. They consider the use of taboo words as common way in communication.

Devito (1989:181) states that the use of taboo words for certain people is natural. They use such words because taboo words are their natural way of communication so that they do not censor them before speaking. For example if one of the members wants to utter human vital organ in his conversation -which is for other society maybe considered as taboo- he will say it directly without trying to find other terms which are more polite. On the other hand, Wardhaugh (1986:230) claims that the purpose of using taboo word is to draw attention, to be aggressive or provocative, or as a form of verbal seduction.

As far as the writer is concerned, what Wardhaugh and Devito have explained above happen in the Indonesian society especially in the "kampung" society. The "kampung" inhabitants consider taboo words as common things and there are no punishments for the people who use such words -as long as they use them in their environment. Sometimes some inhabitants use euphemism to replace taboo words, but still others prefer using taboo words than euphemisms. Here, they use taboo words in various situations: formal and informal, friendly and unfriendly, etc. Furthermore,

there are also various users of taboo words: male, female, old, young, uneducated and even educated.

Because of the fact that most of "kampung" inhabitants use taboo words in their daily life freely without any punishments from other members and based on the writer's observation that most of Banyu urip "kampung" inhabitants employ taboo words, the writer decided to do the research concerning the use of taboo words by some "kampung" inhabitants and wrote this thesis entitled "A Study on Taboo Words as Used by Banyu urip "kampung" inhabitants in Surabaya".

## **1.2 Statements of the Problem**

As explained in the background, the "kampung" inhabitants often use taboo words in their daily conversations and in many other situations. In line with such a condition, the problem of this study were formulated as follows:

1. What kind of taboo words are usually used by the Banyu urip "kampung" inhabitants ?
2. What are the functions of taboo words used by Banyu urip "kampung" inhabitants?
3. What are the factors that influence them to use taboo Words ?

## **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

This study intended to describe:

1. The kinds of taboo words which are often used by the Banyu urip "kampung" inhabitants.
2. The functions of taboo words used by Banyu urip "kampung" inhabitants.
3. The factors that influence them to use taboo words.

#### **1.4 The Significance of the Study**

By analysing the uses of taboo words by Banyu urip "kampung" inhabitants in Surabaya the writer hopes that the findings of this study will give a contribution to Sociolinguistics studies in the area of the use of taboo words by "kampung" inhabitants in Indonesia. Moreover, the study was also held to provide some information about the factors that cause the frequent use of taboo words by Banyu urip "kampung" inhabitants in Surabaya.

#### **1.5 Scope and Limitation**

Since there are many "kampungs" in Surabaya, the writer only took one "kampung" as the sample of this study and the observation of this study is focused on Jalan Banyu urip Kidul VII. This area is chosen because of several conditions. First, the writer has close friends who live there. Second, the writer has lived there a couple years ago so that she is familiar with the condition and the atmosphere of this area. Third, most of Banyu urip "kampung" inhabitants often use taboo words in

their daily conversations. Those factors enable the writer to observe the subjects under study easily.

Because this study is about the use of taboo words in Banyu urip "kampung" inhabitants in Surabaya and the subjects of this study are Indonesian especially Javanese, the writer only analysed the taboo words which are used by Indonesian people. So here she did not analyse the English taboo words such as motherfucker, damn, shit, fuck, etc.

#### **1.6 Theoretical framework**

There are three main theories which are used in this study; they are The Functions of Language, the Relationship between Language and Society and the Use of Taboo Words and Euphemisms.

Sapir as quoted by Blount (1974:46) states that language is a perfect means of expression and communication. He also explains that language has a function of socialiser too. Here, Sapir points out that the social intercourse is hardly possible without a language. According to Holmes (1992:2) in communication, language has many functions such as asking and giving information, expressing indignation and annoyance, admiration and respect.

As the functions of language are various, there are various relationships between language and society. Wardhaugh (1986) and Grimshaw (1981) propose four possible relationships between language and society. One important

relationship that supports this study is social structure that determine linguistics structure and/or behaviour. Furthermore, Holmes (1982:6) states that the linguistic choices in various situations can be influenced by many factors such as social factors and social dimensions (discussed further in Chapter II).

As for the use of taboo words, Devito (1989:179) states that the factors that usually influence people to use taboo words are age, sex/gender, communication context, speaker-listener relationships, educational and intellectual level of the individual.

### **1.7 Definition of Key Terms**

The writer would like to explain some key terms in order to enable the readers to understand them. The key terms are:

1. Taboo words are words which consists of types of swearing, cursing and abusing that utilizes indecent words and phrases (Rothwell, 1973:108).
2. Euphemism is nice word designed to replace taboo words or expressions and to sweeten topic that may be unpleasant (Devito, 1989:181).
3. Inhabitants are a group of people which lives in one places and creates social interaction among their members.

### **1.8 Organisation of the Thesis**

This thesis consists of five chapters. The first chapter is Introduction, which is divided into eight subtopics: background of the study, statements of the problem, objectives of the study, the significance of the study, scope and limitation, theoretical framework, definition of key terms, and organisation of the thesis.

The second chapter reviews some literatures related to the study. It discusses the theories used in this study namely: Language Functions, the Relationships between Language and Society, and the Use of Taboo Words and Euphemisms. This chapter also presents the related studies.

The third chapter is about the Research Method. It discusses the nature and design of the study, the subjects, instruments and procedures of collecting and analysing the data.

The fourth chapter is about findings and the discussion of the findings.

The last chapter of this study presents the conclusion, summary and suggestions concerning the topic under study.