

**A SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF TABOO UTTERANCES
ON MEN AND WOMEN SPEECHES IN
THE ERIN BROKOVICH MOVIE MANUSCRIPT**



RESEARCH PAPER

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Language expresses and creates the social identity of the speaker of particular culture. According to Wardhaugh that the culture of a people finds reflection on the language they employ; because they value certain things and do them in a certain way, they come to use their language in ways that reflect what they value and what they do' (Wardhaugh, 1998: 126). In this ways there is a certain concept that underlies interaction among people; which are particular knowledge and assumption.

A particular knowledge and assumption underlying the communication event is significantly affected by the cultural scheme they involved in. The culture which a person lives strongly fosters him or her in accordance to the norm of society he or she lives in. Later, Goodenough (1957: 167 in Wardhaugh 1986: 219) defined culture as a society's culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its member, and to do so in any role that they accept for any one of themselves

Culture, therefore, is the 'know-how' that a person must possess to get through the task of daily living; only for a few does it require a knowledge of some, or much, music, literature, arts, and language. Hence, language becomes reflection of the social and cultural phenomena occurred in the

society. Sociolinguistics, then as a part of linguistics, concerned with language and cultural phenomena (Trudgill, 1974: 32).

In this cultural context, people may speak different language in different social context. One factor which influences social context is gender. Gender difference in language use is one phenomenon about ways of using particular language and the social roles of women and men who speak this language. In every society, men and women tend to use language slightly different. Even, some societies have been reported to have distinct men's and women's speech. Trudgill states that men's and women's speech are not only different; women's speech is (socially) better than men's speech. This is the reflection of the fact that, generally speaking, more 'correct' social behavior is expected of women. Linguistic sex varieties arise because language as a social phenomenon is closely related to social attitudes. Men and women are socially different in that society lays down different social roles for them and expects different behavior patterns from them.

Some linguists in the past showed that there are some distinctions on men's and women's language through their studies in language and gender. It is claimed that men swear more than women do. Men also insult each other frequently. In conversation, men dominated it by interrupting more. According to Tannen, 'for men, conversation is negotiations in which people try to achieve and maintain the upper hand if they can, and protect themselves from others' attempts to put them down and push them around. Life, then, is a

contest, a struggle to preserve independence and avoid failure.’ (Tannen in Hudson, 1996: 141).

Empirical studies of gender and talk have documented several specific features of speech that are said to differentiate between male and female speakers. Example of these are avoidance of strong swear words and euphemisms (Lakoff, 1975 in Holmes 1992). Therefore, this suggests that society in general give men such more freedom to express taboo words than women. Women who employ taboo utterance will be considered indecent, rude, and impolite especially if they utter it in public places. Thus, taboo words including swear words, curse words, obscene words, four-letter words, and dirty words are less likely used by women in public domain. Cultural notion of modesty and politeness often avoid women from using such words. In many societies, such words is not permitted in social setting where both men and women present. Taboo words are to be avoided because they are powerful and cause unexpected consequences. There are degrees of tabooeness and some words are much more strongly tabooed than others. The use of euphemism, synonym, and softened expletives may be the characteristics of some women, but it is also of some men. Women may use the words ‘shoot’ instead of ‘shit’, ‘fudge’ for ‘fuck’ and ‘heck’ for ‘hell’. These words are commonly used in everyday conversation between people.

Particularly, conversations happen in movie manuscript, where the actors represent the daily conversations. Movie script or manuscript is a kind of written language which contains utterances in the form of texts or

documents that are spoken by the actors in a film. Movie manuscript has detailed and complete utterances which comprises the cultural context of a certain language. Therefore, it is inevitable to see taboo words uttered in a movie manuscript.

According to the preliminary concept and examples above the researcher is interested in analyzing taboo utterances in movie manuscript. Therefore, the researcher will analyze the taboo utterances of men and women speech in Erin Brockovich movie manuscript. The Erin Brockovich movie has almost equal portion of talks between the men and women actors. Thus, the research which the researcher intended to carry out is **A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Taboo Utterances on Men and Women Speeches in The Erin Brockovich Movie Manuscript.**

B. Previous Study

In conducting this research, the researcher is inspired by one research in the field of language and gender. The research was about language features of women's speech. The researcher considers the research as a source of insight to this research. The research was conducted by Rusmiyatun (2002), from Sebelas Maret University entitled **"The Analysis of Lexical Hedges on Women Speech in Jane Austen's Sense and Sensibility"**. She focused her research on the features of women speech, particularly on lexical hedges. She found out that women applied more hedges in speech. The focus

of this study is also on women speech. However, the framework of this study is on the taboo utterances of men and women.

C. Focus of the Study

The problem statements that are proposed by the researcher are as follows:

1. What are the linguistic forms of taboo utterances on men and women speeches in Erin Brockovich movie manuscript?
2. What are the categories of taboo words on men and women speeches in Erin Brockovich movie manuscript?
3. What are the functions of taboo utterance on men and women speeches in Erin Brockovich movie manuscript?
4. What are the factors which influence the use taboo utterances on men and women speeches in Erin Brockovich movie manuscript?

D. Objective of the Study

In carrying this research, the researcher formulates the objectives of the study as follows:

1. To describe the linguistic forms taboo utterances of men and women speeches in Erin Brockovich movie manuscript.
2. To classify the categories of taboo words on men and women speeches in Erin Brockovich movie manuscript.
3. To describe the function of the taboo utterances on men and women speeches in Erin Brockovich movie manuscript.

4. To describe the factors which influence the use of taboo utterances on men and women speeches in Erin Brockovich movie manuscript.

E. Limitation of the Study

In conducting the research the researcher limits the problem on the taboo utterances in Erin Brockovich movie manuscript. The researcher focuses on the lexico-grammatical (words, phrases, clause, and sentences) utterances of the actress and actors in the Erin Brockovich movie manuscript. The researcher applies sociolinguistics approach.

F. Benefit of the Study

The result of the study is expected to be beneficial in two ways:

1. Academic Benefit

This study could give contributions to the development of sociolinguistic discipline. Besides that, this research will give more emphasis on giving new insight of taboo utterances in movie manuscript.

2. Practical Benefit

This research could help readers to understand the taboo utterances in Erin Brockovich movie manuscript using sociolinguistic approach. Furthermore, the readers will get more insight on types and function of taboo utterances in Erin Brockovich movie manuscript.

G. Research Paper Organization

The researcher arranges the paper as follows:

Chapter I is introduction. This chapter will include the background of the study, previous study, problem statement, limitation of the study, the objective of the study, benefit of the study and research paper organization.

Chapter II is the underlying theory. This chapter will discuss the linguistic form, the notion of sociolinguistics, ethnography of communication, language and gender, women speech, men speech, taboo words, and movie manuscript.

Chapter III is research method. This chapter covers type of research, object of research, type of data and data sources, method of data collection, and technique of data analysis.

Chapter IV is analysis and discussion. This chapter consists of analysis of the data and discussion finding of the types and function of taboo utterances in Erin Brockovich movie manuscript.

Chapter V is closing. It consists of conclusion and suggestion of the entire research paper.