

**AN ANALYSIS OF SWEARING WORDS USED BY CHARACTERS IN
BLOOD FATHER MOVIE**



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for the degree of Master of Education**

by:

DWI RAHMADI

S200150019

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by:

DWI RAHMADI

S200150019

Approve to be examined by the advisors team

Primary Supervisor

Co-Supervisor



Agus Wijayanto, Ph.D.



Mauliy Halwat Hikmat, Ph.D.

APPROVAL OF ARTICLE FOR SUBMISSION

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Dwi Rahmadi

S200150019

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The Board of Examiners :

**1. Agus Wijayanto, Ph.D
(Primary supervisor)**

(.....)

**2. Mauliy Halwat Hikmat, Ph.D
(Co-supervisor)**

(.....)

**3. Dr. Anam Sutopo, M.Hum.
(Internal examiner)**

(.....)

Surakarta, 27th April 2017

The Director of Graduate School



Khudzaifah Dimiyati

Prof .Dr. Khudzaifah Dimiyati

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I am the writer of this article,

Name : Dwi Rahmadi

NIM : S200150019

Program : Magister of Language Studies

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Dwi Rahmadi

AN ANALYSIS OF SWEARING WORDS USED BY CHARACTERS IN *BLOOD FATHER* MOVIE

Abstract

This study aims at identifying the types of swearing words used by all characters in *Blood Father* Movie and the factors contribute to those swearing. It is a descriptive qualitative research which formulates the conclusion by collecting, classifying, and interpreting the data. The data is elicited through documentation technique then classified based on theory before being interpreted. The source of the data is the script of the movie taken from the internet. The utterances containing swearing words are used as the data of the research. The types of swearing words found in this research are 5 stand-alone functions, 4 slot filler functions, and 4 themes. The stand-alone functions include expletive interjection (58 data or 27%), oaths (2 data or 1%), curses (4 data or 2%), unfriendly suggestion (4 data or 2%), name-calling (55 or 25%). The slot fillers are adjectival intensifier (4 data or 2%), adjective of dislike (6 data or 4%), emphasis (72 data or 34%), and modal adverbial (6 data or 3%). The themes are religious theme (24 data or 11%), scatological theme (40 data or 20%), sex organ theme (2 data or 1%), and sexual activities theme (147 data or 68%). Among the three factors which contribute to swearing, the most dominant factor is neurological (80 data or 38%). After that is psychological factor (73 data or 34%) and the least dominant factor is sociocultural (60 data or 24%).

Keywords: swearing words, *Blood Father* movie, types of swearing, factors contributing swearing

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi tipe-tipe umpatan yang diucapkan oleh para karakter di film *Blood Father* dan faktor-faktor yang melandasi umpatan-umpatan tersebut. Penelitian ini adalah penelitian kualitatif yang merumuskan kesimpulan melalui pengumpulan, pengelompokan, dan penerjemahan data. Data dikumpulkan melalui dokumentasi kemudian dikelompokkan lalu diterjemahkan. Sumber data penelitian ini adalah skrip film yang diperoleh melalui internet. Data adalah Dialog yang mengandung umpatan. Tipe umpatan yang ditemukan dalam penelitian ini adalah 5 stand-alone, 4 slot fillers, dan 4 theme. Stand-alone function yang ditemukan yaitu expletive interjection (58 data atau 27%), oaths (2 data atau 1%), curses (4 data atau 2%), unfriendly suggestion (4 data atau 2%), dan name-calling (55 atau 25%). Kemudian slot fillers yang ditemukan yaitu adjectival intensifier (4 data atau 2%), adjective of dislike (6 data atau 4%), emphasis (72 data atau 34%), and modal adverbial (6 data atau 3%). The themes are religious theme (24 data atau 11%), scatological theme (40 data atau 20%), sex organ theme (2 data atau 1%) dan sexual activities theme (147 data or 68%). Dari tiga faktor yang melandasi umpatan, faktor yang paling dominan adalah faktor neurologi yaitu 80 data (38%), yang kedua faktor psikologi (73 data atau 34%) dan terakhir faktor sosiokultural (60 data atau 24%)

Kata kunci: umpatan, film *Blood Father*, tipe umpatan, faktor penyumbang umpatan

1. INTRODUCTION

Communication has an important role in human life. It helps people to understand each other and to fulfill their need. In order to have a good communication, they use a device to express their ideas or feelings. This device is called language. Language allows people to say things to each other and express communication needs (Wardough, 1986).

People use language for many purposes such as providing information, giving commands, expressing feelings, social talking, world play, and poetry (Aitchison, 1996). Through language people can maintain their daily activities. People also use language to reveal their personal identities. As stated by Holmes (1992) that the way you speak is usually a good indicator of your social background. In brief, humans use language to communicate and to show their social identity in the society.

When people communicate each other, they may have different opinions from others. Sometimes, it causes dislike, dissatisfaction, or anger between the speaker and the hearer. In this condition, they tend to speak swear words. They usually swear or curse to strengthen those feelings. They argue against the use of swearing words on the grounds that they are cursing, insulting, offensive, blasphemous, obscene, rude, or just unnecessary.

Andersson and Trudgill (1990) stated that swearing could be defined as a type of language use in which the expression (a) refers of something that is taboo and/or stigmatized in the culture; (b) should not be interpreted literally; (c) can be used to express strong emotions and attitudes. In line with this, Karjalainen (2002) states that swearing is a form of linguistic expression which is often referred to bad language because all swearwords are taboo, although not all taboo words are swearwords. In fact, many people always associate swearwords with something bad. That is why, they prefer not use them in a conversation. However, there are some other people who still employ them in their conversation, especially to express their feeling.

Some people find swearing to be rude and disrespectful, while others find it quite useful in their everyday vocabulary. There are differences in occupation as a function of gender and status, men are always expected to swear more than women in equivalent occupations and higher status

personnel (e. g., dean) are expected to swear less than lower status and there are also myths that grow in society that only the undereducated speakers swear (Jay, 2009).

Swearing words have evolved thousands years ago to represent human expressions. Before the nineteenth century, swearing words were not popular because those words were strictly forbidden, mainly by religion. The religion emphasizes that the Lord's name should not be taken in vain so references to God in oaths were taboo. The reference to sexuality and bodily function is also taboo.

Nowadays, people cannot deny that swearing is a part of social life. As stated by Mohr (2013) about 0.7% of the words a person uses in the course of a day are swear words. In other words, the average person uses foul language at the same rate at which they use first-person plural pronouns (we, our, ourselves). The typical range goes from zero to about 3%. The use of swearing words becomes more popular as can be seen in daily life as well as in media such as television, radio and film. In the film, some script writers and directors of movie still do not avoid using swearing in the dialogues because movie is a representation of a real life.

Blood Father is one of the movies that represent the real life of the society, especially gangster and criminal life in America. It tells about John who was a prisoner and running for rehabilitation process because of drug addiction and law breaking. His marriage divorced and he lost contact with his wife and his daughter. One day, his daughter, Lydia, called and came to his place then stayed for a while. Everything looked normal until three men came in a night and try to kill them. Lately, John knew that Lydia has shot his boyfriend who was a gangster. By that time, John fought and protected his daughter like he used to do before he was jailed.

The use of swearwords in this movie can be seen from the situation when the characters express anger, afraid, frustration, surprise, shock, insult, friendship and amusement. Jay (2000) proposes the Neuro-Psycho-Social (NPS) Theory to analyze why people curse and why they choose the certain words to curse. It explores three aspects of human behavior i.e. neurological control, psychological restraints, and socio-cultural restrictions. An act of

cursing cannot be understood without considering simultaneously those three aspects above.

Jay adds (2000) that to understand a curse word, we have to integrate the historical, social, and psychological system. The historical-social information about the word use is formed by the socio-cultural system. The linguistic and semantic analysis of a curse word use is formed by the psychological system. In the psychological system, a speaker acquires linguistic competence and performance as the result of psychological development within a socio-cultural language context. Different cultures and different languages present different linguistic and semantic constructing the dirty words use. Psychological development includes variables that directly affect cursing, such as temperament, personality, religiosity, and social rewards and punishments. Underlying the psychological development is the developing brain. The developing brain is a neurological system of control processes. It plays central role in regulating a speaker's verbal expressions at different levels of awareness and controllability.

It can be said that the uses of swearing words have various functions. The ways of swearing words expressed and the situational background of the dialogues determine the reason of swearing words employed by the characters. The act of swearing in Blood Father Movie is done by most of the characters in every dialogue. It is interesting to know what type of swearing mostly used by them and why they use it.

There are some research that have been done dealing with the use of swearing words in a movie e.g. Windardeni (2010), Setiawan (2010), Mawati (2012), and Prihartanti (2012). Windardeni and Mawati analyzed the use of swearing words in a movie based on sociolinguistic approach. They explore the type of swearing words used by the character and the reason they employed those words from sociolinguistic views. In the other hand, Setiawan and Prihartanti analyzed the translation of the swearing words from translation analysis of English into Indonesian. They explores the subtitle of the movie then analyzed it. Continued what they have been done before, this research tries to fill the gap on their research. It analyzed all the swearing words, not the translation, used by the characters and the reason why they

employed those words not only from sociolinguistics approach but also from neurological and psychological approach based on Jay's NPS Theory.

This study tries to identify the types of swearing used by characters in *Blood Father* movie and the factors contribute to those swearing. The problems found could help English teachers and the students to speak and talk carefully in society. Still, swearing utterances are unacceptable in some societies. Thus, having good understanding of types and the use of swearing will help them to minimize the conflict with other people.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is qualitative research. It refers to study about people's lives, experiences, behavior, emotions, and feelings, and phenomena on cultural entities. The purpose of this type of research tends to be descriptive rather than predictive (Vanderstoep and Johnston, 2009). This was in line with the aim of this research, to identify and describe the types of swearing and the factors contribute for all characters of *Blood Father* movie to swear. It is focuses on the swearing words uttered by all characters. The data is taken from the script using documentation technique. Therefore, the data are in the form of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences containing swearing words. The researcher applies referential analysis technique, in which the data were analyzed referring to the employed theories. The procedures of data analysis are coding, analyzing, discussing, and reporting.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data analysis, the findings of types of swearing and factors contributing swearing are as follows:

3.1. Types of Swearing Words

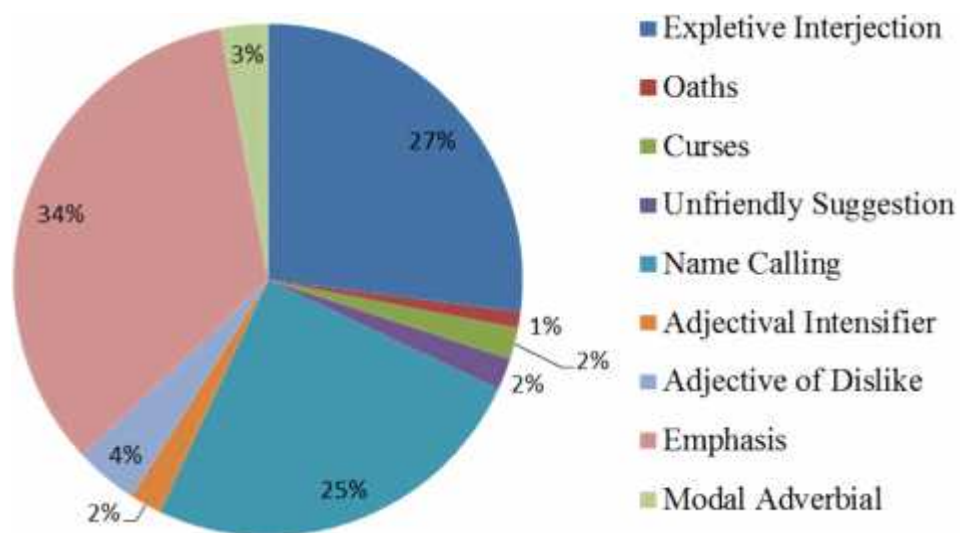
The types of swearing are decided based on the function and based on the theme. The whole finding can be seen on table and figure below:

Table 1
Frequencies of Types of Swearing Words Based on the Function

NO	Types of Swearing Word	Frequencies	Percentage
Stand Alone Function			
1.	Expletive Interjection	58	27%
2.	Oaths	2	1%

3.	Curses	4	2%
4.	Affirmation and Contradiction	0	0%
5.	Unfriendly Suggestion	4	2%
6.	Ritual Insults	0	0%
7.	Name Calling	55	25%
Slot Filler			
1.	Adjectival Intensifier	4	2%
2.	Adjective of Dislike	8	4%
3.	Emphasis	72	34%
4.	Modal Adverbial	6	3%
5.	Anaphoric Use of Epithets	0	0%
6.	Noun Supports	0	0%
TOTAL		213	100%

Figure 1
Frequencies of Types of Swearing Words Based on the Function



The total of swearing words uttered by characters in *Blood Father* Movie are 213 utterances. From the table above, it can be seen that there are five types of stand-alone function and four types of slot filler function used by the characters in the movie. The stand-alone functions used by characters are expletive interjection, oaths, curses, unfriendly suggestions,

and name calling. The expletive interjection employs 58 data or 27% represented by *assholes, fuck, God, shit, and Goddamn*. The oaths only employ 2 (1%) data i.e. *swear to God and for Christ's sake*. The curses employ 4 data or 2% which all of them are *fuck you*. The unfriendly suggestion employs 4 data or 2% also which presented by “*Go fuck yourself*”, “*Why don't you all fuck off*”, “*Get the fuck outta here*”, and “*Get in the other car and fuck off*”. The last is name calling which employs 55 data or 25% which represented by *cheap-ass nines, bitch, shit, prick, grumpy old bastard, fucked-up daughter, motherfucker, son of a bitch, dick, cocksucker, and horseshit*.

As shown on the table above, it can be stated that the most dominant stand-alone functions used by characters in *Blood Father* Movie are expletive interjection and name-calling. They have almost similar percentage where expletive interjection is 27% and name-calling is 25%. Expletive interjection deals with the expressions of disappointment, surprise, or anger which is usually uttered by a single word or short phrase (Ljung, 2011). This expression is impulsive so it is said directly at the time the speaker feels angry, surprised, or disappointed. Name-calling deals with the way of insulting someone or something of the third party (Ljung, 2011). It shows speakers' negative opinion towards the one who is being insulted. The characters are often to use them because during the movie there are many situations which trigger the characters to get angry, disappointed, and surprised. Those feelings are expressed directly at the time they feel it.

Another type of stand-alone function is name-calling. The numbers of name-calling (55 data) used by the characters are almost the same with the expletive interjection (58 data). All of the dialogues are done informally. Moreover, the social setting of the movie relates to crime and violence. They are easy to express their negative feelings about someone they don't like. The name-calling is addressed to third party but the characters are not doubt to say it even in front of the third one. Because their life is closely related to crime so they accustomed to insult someone or something. The least used stand-alone function is oaths. They are rare to

use it because they almost never swear to God. They use swearing relates to God as exclamation or emphasizing.

Now, we move to discuss the slot filler function. The slot-fillers used by the characters are adjectival intensifier, adjective of dislike, emphasis, and modal adverbial. The adjectival intensifier employs 4 data or only 2% which presented by *fucking useless, fucking patient, too goddamn comfortable, and so fucking broke and pathetic*. The adjective of dislike employs 6 data or 4% which represented by *fucking robot, fuckin punk, and the worst goddamn people*. The emphasis employs 72 data or 34% represented by *normal fucking people, where the fuck is it?, where the hell are you?, big-ass heart, hell no, and goddamn patience*. The last, modal adverbial employs 6 data or 3% represented by *fucking lie and fucking turn*. From the data above, the most dominant slot filler is emphasis. The characters are often to emphasize something or someone they talk. However, it is not usual emphasizing because they use swearing words to emphasize for example *the fuck, fucking, the hell, and goddamn*.

Based on the theme, this study found 4 theme i.e. religion theme, scatological theme, sex organ theme, and sexual activities theme. There is no data found about the mother theme. The result of the theme finding can be seen on the table and figure below:

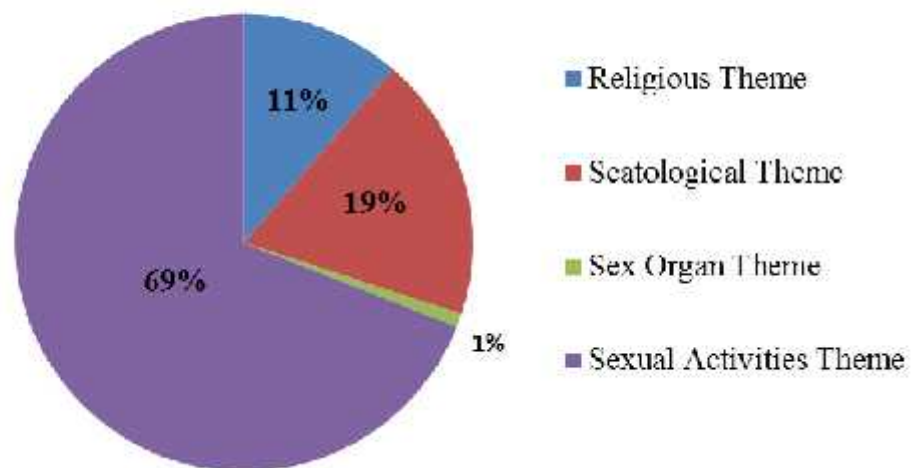
Table 2
Frequencies of Types of Swearing Words Based on the Theme

NO	Type of Swearing Word	Frequencies	Percentage
1	Religious Theme	24	11%
2	Scatological Theme	40	20%
3	Sex Organ Theme	2	1%
4	Sexual Activities Theme	147	68%
5	Mother Theme	0	0%
TOTAL		213	100%

The religious theme which found are 24 data or 11% represented by *hell, God, goddamn, and for Christ's sake*. The scatological theme which found are 40 data or 20% represented by *cheap-ass nine, shit,*

assholes, and big-ass heart. The sex organ theme found are 2 data or only 1% presented by *prick and dick*. The sexual activities found are 147 data or 68% represented by *fucking useless, bastard, motherfucker, and cocksucker*. From the table above, it can be stated that the most dominant theme is sexual activities theme. It deals with any activities related to sexual intercourse like *fuck, fucking, bastard, motherfucker, cocksucker, bitch, etc*. It is the most often swearing words used by characters in Blood Father Movie. Below the sexual activities theme, the second position is scatological theme. It deals with both the organ and or the result of secrecy (Ljung, 2011).

Figure 2
Frequencies of Types of Swearing Words Based on the Theme



3.2. Factors Contributing Swearing

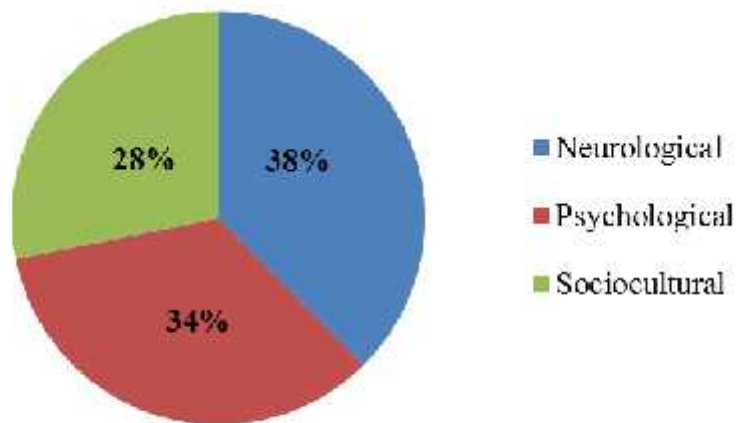
In order to understand deeper about what lies behind swearing above, this part will also discuss the factor contributing swearing that have been found. Swearing is not accidental action. It involves multiple factors which occur in short time (Jay, 2000). Throw back to what Jay proposes about NPS theory of speech, in which elaborating three dimensional factors, swearing should be seen regarding those three factors to get deep understand. The three factors are neurological, psychological, and sociocultural. Those three are interlocking system but one factor may over dominate the others. This study has found those

three factors in different numbers as can be seen on the table and figure below:

Table 3
Frequencies of Factors Contributing Swearing

NO	Factor Contributing Swearing	Frequencies	Percentage
1	Neurological	80	38%
2	Psychological	73	34%
3	Sociocultural	60	24%
TOTAL		213	100%

Figure 3
Frequencies of Factors Contributing Swearing



This study found 80 data of neurological factors or 38% which represented by *fucking robot, fuck (anger), God, Goddamn, shit, fuck you and fuck (pain)*. The psychological factors are found 73 data or 34% which represented by *I swear to God, fucking daycare, where the hell are you?, fuck, oh my God, too goddamn comfortable, and for Christ's sake*. The sociocultural factors are found 60 data or 24% which represented by *cheap-ass nine, bitch, shit, prick, grumpy old bastard, go fuck yourself, fuck off, and motherfucker*. The difference numbers among them are slight. The neurological factors is dominant but it only 4% more than psychological. And sociocultural is the least factor contributing swearing used by characters in this movie.

Comparing with some previous studies, Windardeni (2010) and Mawati (2012) also focused on the types of swearing in a movie. The result of Ljung's typology of swearing in this study agrees with Hughes's (1998) in Windardeni (2010) and Mawati (2012). The sexual activities and disgusting things are dominant swearing words used by characters of the movie. The difference is that Hugh includes the sexual activities on General and excretion type whereas Ljung adds them on sexual activities and scatological theme. It contrasts with Cressman (2009) findings which the excretory is the least prevalent in his study. It shows that the use of excretory or scatological things in swearing is increase. In the other hand, it only has slight differences with Gati (2014) who concludes that the swearing words that mostly used are from the motifs of religion and bodily function like God, hell, shit, and fuck.

The result of the present study has slight differences with Ljung's theory (2011). The total swearing utterances found is 213 data. It only found 5 stand-alone, 4 slot fillers, and 4 major themes. It also didn't found any minor theme during the research. The result shows that most of swearing types are the expression of anger, insult, dislike, frustration, and surprise. Expletive interjection, name calling and emphasis dominate over other types. Those expressions above are uttered mostly by using words related to sexual activities and scatological things. The setting and characterization might have influenced those. Criminal life, uneducated people, jail, and mafia are really matching the most dominant types of swearing.

The result supports Jay's (2000) work about neurological factors. It also agrees with Wang et al (2014) that swearing is associated with negative swearing. The difference with this study is the negative emotion found by Wang et al (2014) is not only anger but also sadness. Swearing as the expression of sadness is not found in this study.

Another previous study about swearing in a movie is Susetyaningsih (2014). She studied the reason of swearing which is called motives. She found that the motives are psychological motives 35%, social motives 25%, and linguistic motives 40%. Her studies result similar with this

current studies'. Linguistic motives related with the brain (neurological) factor which dominates in this study followed by psychological motives (psychological factor) in the second place and social motives (sociocultural factor) in the third or last place.

The result agrees with Jay (2000) theory. It found three factors which contribute the swearing: neurological factor, psychological factor, and sociocultural factor. The result shows that neurological factor dominates over psychological and sociocultural factor. It means that most of the swearing utterances are the expression of anger, surprise, frustration, and pain. It employs 80 data whereas psychological factor employs almost the same with 71 data and sociocultural factor employs the least with 60 data. It is interesting to note that sociocultural factor is not the dominant if we consider the setting of the movie. It strongly shows the criminal life and uneducated people. They live away from the society and create their own rules. In fact, neurological and psychological systems are the most factors which drive the characters to employ swearing. However, the result is difference with Vingerhoets et al (2013) who concludes that swearing can have a variety of interpersonal consequences which mostly occurs for social reason like group bonding and solidarity.

4. CONCLUSION

The types of swearing found in the movie based on the function are 5 stand-alone and 4 slot-fillers. The stand-alone are expletive interjection, oaths, curses, unfriendly suggestion, and name calling. The slot fillers are adjectival intensifiers, adjective of dislike, emphasis, and modal adverbial. The types of swearing based on the theme found during this study are religious theme, scatological theme, sex organ theme, and sexual activities theme. Most of the characters use expletive interjection, name calling, emphasis, scatological theme, and sexual activities to express their anger, dislike, surprise, frustration, and insult. The factors contributing swearing are neurological, psychological and sociocultural. They all are found in this study. The neurological factors are found 80 data, the psychological factors are found 73 data, and the sociocultural factors are found 60 data. The most major factor which contributes the characters to swear is neurological factors.

Below the neurological factor is psychological with slight differences. They relate to emotional arousal, personality, and religiosity.

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