



Types of profanity in a series “True Sight” by Valve on YouTube

Naufal Renaldi Kasyun¹, Yeni Noryatin¹, Ade Surista¹

¹STBA JIA, Jawa Barat, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

Background: This research studies about profanity types made by professional players in the documentaries video True Sight by Valve on YouTube.

Purpose: The aims of this study are to recognize the applications of each profanity types, to explain the types of profanity word the utterances that used, and to find out the most frequent types of profanity types of the utterances that used by the professional players in documentaries video True Sight on YouTube.

Design and methods: To achieve the aims of the study, the writer uses Steven Pinker’s theory of profanity types to analyzing the data. This study is a qualitative which the writer interprets of utterances that contain the types of profanity words in this documentaries series.

Results: The result of study showed that 30 utterances of profanity word were successfully identified that made by the professional players. In this study, the writer found that the professional player uses all the types of profanity, such as, abusive swearing, idiomatic swearing, dysphemistic swearing, cathartic swearing and emphatic swearing. There are 32 types that identified out of 30 utterances uttered by the professional player which conclude 9 emphatic swearing or 28.1%, 7 cathartic and idiomatic swearing or 21.9% , 5 abusive swearing or 15.6%, and 4 dysphemistic swearing or 12.5%. So it can be concluded that the dominant profanity types is emphatic swearing, because this documentaries video contained many profanities of the professional player as a gamer in the gaming community who has a culture of not to speak in a formal conversation.

Keywords: sociolinguistics, profanity types, profanity

Introduction

People have their own style of languages and have a freedom to speak or utter their own understanding of the language that willing to speak, but in the freedom itself there is a limit of what things should be uttered and understood about when and where to use it. In doing so, there is a rule of our society or attitude to speak what kind of style language that used.

Human beings are known as social creature and cannot live without other people. To survive, one of the things to do is building a relationship with others human being. It is why people need to have a good communication skills as a social process. Generally, people use language to communicate their intention to others. Specifically, language is used by people to convey messages or to send information in order to make the conversation activities run smoothly. In addition, Chaika (1999, p. 17) also stated that people use language to reveal or conceal personal identity, character and background without realizing that just actually doing so. Therefore, every person has their own way to choose the language variation which can confirm someone’s identity.

Its uniqueness is situated on its versatility which enables an expression to have various meanings regarding to its function. Swearing *fuck*, for example, can function as an indication of anger, emphasis or offense; swearing *shit* can be used to express misfortune, dislike, or surprise; swearing *hell* can function as an emphatic marker or a disappointment. Each

CONTACT Yeni Noryatin ✉ yeninoryatin@yahoo.com

© 2020 The Author(s). Published by CV. Mitra Palupi. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

expression for swearing used in a different setting, thus, will demand a different interpretation. Furthermore, with regard to its controversy, the realization of swearing is also problematic due to being restricted in media regardless its positive effects (e.g. physical /psychological pain-release, emphasis or humour).

Swearing in media (e.g. televisions, books, motion pictures, or radios) is actually not new, but its existence is still problematic. Swearing is problematic because its existence in the past was not as prevalent as it is now. Preston (2008) states that swearing in media nowadays has become more normal than before, and the normality of swearing in media becomes a public concern because people worry that swearing can influence moral degradation. Besides, swear words are not just a collection of words that sound impolite, rude, vulgar, and inappropriate to be said. Each word is more than their literal meaning— people also carry an emotional connotation as a result of how they are used within the language Pinker (2007, p. 12). Therefore, saying some words will give different meanings for the listener. As an example, when people say *sweet pussies*, it will mean a little cat that is sweet. However, when “*pussies*” is used in the different context, like “*fucking pussies*”, it will be bad language that carries emotional function. It means each swear word has different types and meanings based on the contexts when it is uttered.

This research analyzed further the swear words that are uttered by the people in the True Sight series, especially by the Players who use English as their language. Therefore, the research will study the profanity in the documentaries on youtube based on the context of the society as portrayed in the series. The topic of swearing is focused on the verbal expressions uttered by the player and it is associated with emotional feeling towards something.

The use of profanity itself has risen greatly since the 1960s. The reason of this is because increasingly social familiarity and independence in western society, lack of religious importance, and the reduction of profanity restrictions in movie and media Baruch & Jenkins (2007, p. 494). It is estimated that 80 to 90 swear words are used daily by U.S. citizens Jay (2009). There is concern about anti-social effects of the media introducing adolescents to offensive language. Researchers found that there were minimal effects; determining children under the age of twelve are unlikely to even comprehend such language Jay (2009). Considering the high usage frequency of profanity among the public and the varying misconceptions about the influence of swear words, research in this series is needed.

In an effort to investigate parenting styles, Jay, King and Duncan (2006) asked college students to recall instances in punished for using profanity. The results indicated no differences between men and women in level of emotion in their stories and amount of swear word used. Mothers tended to be the primary disciplinarian and verbal punishment was more common than physical punishment. Though the students recalled the punishment with accuracy (with vivid detailed descriptions), it was recorded that 94% currently use swear words. This study supports Jay’s earlier findings: Children learn to swear at an early age and continue to do so throughout life Jay (1992). Furthermore, the participants reported learning to swear from peers and people in their social circle, not through various forms of media, such as television.

While using profanity is not necessarily considered to be socially acceptable, research has found some benefits of swearing. Baruch and Jenkins (2007) found that permitting the use of swear words among peers in the workplace improved management and leadership among workers. Other research has demonstrated the positive effects swearing can have on reducing pain. Stephens and Umland (2011) found that swearing could raise pain tolerance. However, swearing on a daily basis hindered the effect of any benefit swearing can have in helping to reduce pain.

An investigation into the causes of swearing may be helpful in determining what makes individuals swear and under what circumstances. By exploring the personalities and impulsive tendencies of individuals who swear, researchers can better determine the effects profanity can have on society. The purpose of the current study was to analyse the reason of the player using such profanities on the series. Determining first instances of exposure and use of swear words by an individual is an important goal of this study, since research in this area is minimal.

In this case the writer feels that it is necessary to understand what kind of profanity or swear words in English to not be uttered in the wrong place, and the writer chose True Sight as a material to analyse and class the Profanity as the series contains a lot of Profanity that really fit the requirements. Also the True Sight itself has qualified to be in the website review of IMDB and got a very positive responses in their own platform Steam.

According to Pinker (2007, p. 350) the profanity itself has five function that we can use to do the research, and those five types of swearing is Abusive, Cathartic, Dysphemistic, Emphatic, and Idiomatic.

Method

this research is analyzed through qualitative method. Moreover, a descriptive qualitative method aims to look for the comprehension and the meaning of the phenomenon which being studied in detail and deep explanation. Hence, this method is preferred because it is intended to explain the data which consist of profanity types in True Sight Documentary series.

The data of study collected by using several steps. First, the writer watch the series of True Sight on YouTube, www.youtube.com/dota2 that published on 27th September 2017 to 16th January 2019 and only focused on The International Episodes only. Second, the writer searched the swear word, phrase or clause from the video. Third, the writer takes a note and give a mark on swear word, phrase, or clause that are going to be listed in the table. Fourth, the writer selected and categorized the types of profanity classification.

After the data were collected from True Sight, the data need to be analyzed by research instrument technique in order to give the idea of display. Research instrument is a tool which is designed by a researcher to collect data (Wallace and Fleet, 2012, p. 51). Within this study, the tool deployed by the researcher was in the form of a data sheet. The researcher employed a data sheet as an instrument for categorizing the data into types of swearing.

Findings & Discussion

Findings

Based on the data analysis which the writer is taken from the documentaries video of *True Sight* in 27th September 2017 and 16th January 2019, the writer only focuses on 30 data which are considered as the representative data.

From all of the data analysis, the writer found 5 types of profanity which are *Abusive Swearing*, *Idiomatic Swearing*, *Dysphemistic Swearing*, *Cathartic Swearing* and *Emphatic Swearing*. It means in that documentaries video of *True Sight*, the writer does find all the types of profanity that available. The highest frequency of profanity types in this research is Emphatic Swearing. It appears in the amount of 28.1%. Abusive Swearing is used 9 times out of 32 of the total types that has been analyzed from 30 representative data. Meanwhile, the type of *Dysphemistic Swearing* counted as the lowest frequency with only found 4 datum in amount of 12.5% (see table 1).

Table 1 Data interpretation of profanity types

Types of Profanity	Total	Percentage (%)
Abusive Swearing	5	15.6%
Idiomatic Swearing	7	21.9%
Dysphemistic Swearing	4	12.5%
Cathartic Swearing	7	21.9%
Emphatic Swearing	9	28.1%
Total	32	100 %

Discussion

Swearing which is also called as cussing, obscenities, or offensive language refers to any objectionable language, or it can also refer to the employment of taboo expressions Kaye and Sapolsky (2004, p. 912). Ljung (2011, p. 4). Due to its taboo status, swearing is considered to be bad. Swearing as an example of bad language is the use of tabooed expressions functioning to show the swearer's feelings or attitudes). An expression is considered to be a swear word when it breaks against what is unable to be talked or done according to social norms Ljung (2011, p. 5).

Damnation in goddamn, for example, is religiously tabooed because it frightens the addressee by calling a sacred being or a higher force to punish or bring harm on the addressee. Therefore, due to its effect upon the addressee, damnation is tabooed and restricted to be done. Furthermore, since damnation is tabooed in the usage, it becomes powerful when it is employed for swearing. Accordingly, the more an expression is tabooed, the more effects of swearing can be achieved. This is to say that the power of swearing to create particular effects relies heavily upon contexts because taboo is a culture-specific phenomenon.

Not only does context determine the degree of offensiveness of swearing, McEnery (2006, p. 1) states that the intensity of offensiveness created by expressions for swearing is also determined by process of stigmatization. Stigmatization brings an object or an act which is initially neutral to be bad by disapproving the object or the act. *Fuck*, for instance, is originally a neutral term for denoting having sexual intercourse which is equivalent with having coitus, or copulating. However, because *fuck* gets a negative label, it becomes more offensive than coitus and copulation Hastings-Duffield (2015).

With reference to contexts and the degree of offensiveness, cursing might have a little effect or no effect when the addressee's and/or the swearer's religious background is not strong. However, it might cause severe effects on the interlocutor when the addressee has a strong religious background. In addition to someone religious background, swearing also portrays someone's inner state or situation. McEnery (2006, p. 1). Explains that swearing also indicates the swearer's emotional state, social class, and educational background.

Swearing is associated to someone's emotional state when swearing an interjection is used as a technique of releasing strong emotions. Swearing, besides, mirrors social class hierarchy. For example, people with the working class background tend to swear more frequent than people from higher social class because people from a higher social class undergo social pressure to behave well. In addition to social class, swearing also depicts someone educational achievements.

A person who has a higher educational background tends to swear less than a person from lower educational background. First, who uses swear words. It indicates that a person from a particular background might have a greater effect on the addressee than other person from other background. For example, when a priest angrily swears using damnation, the addressee

with a strong religious background will feel a powerful effect from the damnation. Second, where swearing is done. When swearing son of a bitch is deployed during a formal situation, for instance, swearing will achieve greater impact.

Last, how swearing is done contributes to the offensiveness. For example, when someone swears with an angry face and angry tone, the swearing practice is more offensive than swearing without those manners. In addition, swearing which has been extensively explained is accordingly divided into these followings

Pinker (2007, p. 350) also theorizes the categorization of swearing according to its usages. He divides swearing into dysphemistic swearing, idiomatic swearing, emphatic swearing, abusive swearing, and cathartic swearing.

Abusive Swearing

Pinker (2007) deploy the same technical term to refer to a type of swearing which the aim is to insult or to threaten an addressee. Since an utterance is intended to offend a person, this kind of swearing is targeted to the addressee. For example, *fuck yourself!* .

The illustration is abusive swearing because the speaker addresses fuck yourself to a specific person, and the expression is intended to offend the addressee because the usage suggests the addressee to do a degrading activity. *Fuck yourself* which is followed by an exclamation mark is accordingly considered to be abusive as it marks the speaker’s verbal aggression.

The word in the utterance spoken by Miracle- has found to be containing an abusive swearing profanity word, which in this case the word is *bitches*.

Miracle- : *It’s better to play lower bracket*

KuroKy : *You get a lot of practice in. We learned a lot, so that’s nice*

Miracle- : *Upper bracket for Bitches!*

Miracle- saying statement abusively to the team that play through Upper bracket by saying “Upper bracket for Bitches!” the statement also to cheer the team that the enemy team is weaker than Team Liquid which fight more matches in the tournament than other team.

The line is still in the same scene as Datum 01 when the Team Liquid is on the meeting before the Grand Final, Miracle- one of the player on Team Liquid try to jokingly cheers their teammate as he said It’s better to win the tournament through Lower Bracket as it will make the Team Liquid much stronger as they beat all the other team as their warming up matches into the Grand Final by beating all the other team on the main stage, KuroKy approve this statement by Miracle- saying that “You get a lot of practice in. We learned a lot, so thats nice”.

Finally, the utterance “Upper bracket for Bitches!” is an utterance that made by Miracle- as one of the Team Liquid player, as he insulting the other team that playing on the Upper bracket in the tournament.

Idiomatic swearing

Idiomatic swearing is a type of swearing often using idiom in which the meaning of the expression cannot be understood on its own since this type of swearing employs connotative meaning Ljung (2011, p. 26). For example, *it’s fucked up*. Fucked up is an instance of idiomatic swearing because the meaning of the phrase cannot be understood anyway. The meaning cannot be recognized anyhow, as there is nothing to do with the denotative meaning of *fucked* and *up*.

As a consequence, when someone says, it’s *fucked up*, it means that the speaker reports the interlocutor that there is something going wrong, or it can also indicate the existence of a serious trouble. Besides, there are many other examples of idiomatic swearing derived

from sexual terms such as fuck off which is used as a sign to drive someone out, fuck someone over which is used to abuse someone physically, and pissed on which is used to describe contempt.

The word in the utterance spoken by Kuroky has found to be containing an idiomatic swearing profanity word, which in this case the word is *shit*.

Coach : *We started lower bracket, top 12. Did we do anything special?*

KuroKy : *Dude all the **shit** because of one series we lost?*

(Conversation on minute 1:04)

This dialogue happened on team meeting before the finals between Team Liquid (the speaker's team) vs Newbee. They were talking about the strategy they wanted to do against the upcoming enemy team, since they played a lot of games before the finals began due to losing on the Upper Bracket against IG (Invictus Gaming) in the opening game Upper bracket, which will be the hardest way of head into a Grand Final, to put in perspective Team Liquid needed to win five consecutive wins in the Lower bracket of the tournament which in this case they did it miraculously.

The Coach from Team Liquid asking about the strategy on playing in the Grand Final against Newbee, The reason the guy asking "Did we do anything special?" is because of the team has played a lot of game in the Lower bracket which makes them more disadvantage as ever because the enemy team could read the pattern of how Team Liquid playing their game. The team captain KuroKy expressed his annoyance with "Dude all the **shit** because of one series we lost?" toward the guy who asking the question, afraid of the team chemistry not playing well on the main stage Grand Final as a team captain is important to distract other member in the team to stay focus and giving all their best in the game.

Dysphemistic swearing

This type uses a taboo expression to refer to an object or activity Ljung (2011, p. 25). An obvious characteristic of this swearing is that it is the opposite of euphemism which allows speaker to talk about something bad using a polite expression. Thus, dysphemistic swearing drags the interlocutor to think about a negative stuff or shows the interlocutor how unpleasant something is.

For instance, let's fuck! Fuck is meant as having a sexual intercourse which is similar to have a coitus; however, the word fuck has stigmatized by culture, for this word is more offensive rather than just having a sexual intercourse or a coitus. Furthermore, fuck belongs to dysphemistic swearing because this word is expressed explicitly and it brings the most disagreeable sense of having sex to the interlocutor's mind.

The word in the utterance spoken by Topson has found to be containing a profanity word, which in this case the words is *shit*.

Caster : *"Topson, he's running but the rainbows all the way taking down the Invoker, Chalice now dominating."*

Topson : *"Shit."*

The dialogue happened in the game four between OG vs PSG.LGD, in the mid game OG struggling with kill execution and got counter gank by the opponent, as Ceb is asking for a help saying "I'm dying here, do you have anything?" but the midlaner of OG don't want to risk his life choosing to play safe replying "I don't know if i can help here, I have no buy back, pretty shit to go" with this Topson describing the situation is already not in OG's favor with the phrase "pretty shit to go" meaning a degree that the situation is already as bad as a literal shit in the meaning.

Finally the word "shit" in the dialogue above uttered by Topson, is an expression of state that the situation is quite worst than the meaning of "shit" itself, therefore the word "shit"

recognize as Dysphemistic Swearing simply because it is there to describe a state of how bad the situation is.

Cathartic Swearing

Andersson’s and Trudgill’s technical term is expletive swearing which is similar with Pinker’s cathartic swearing in terms of meaning and usage. Cathartic swearing is swearing which is utilized when something unwanted or out of control occurs. This type of swearing is generally performed in a bad condition which provokes someone to relieve his strong emotion (e.g. rage or frustration).

Thus, a taboo expression is employed as a way of venting a negative emotion. Furthermore, cathartic swearing can be performed with or without any audience. For example, *shit, damn, and fuck* Pinker (2007, p. 366). The scatological, religious, and sexual theme in the illustration have lost their original meanings because during an unwanted situation, those expressions are not deployed to refer to the agreed meanings. However, they retain their emotional value to express strong emotions.

The word in the utterance spoken by Matumbaman has found to be containing a profanity word, which in this case the word is *Holy shit*.

Miracle- : “Nice!”

Matumbaman: “Holy shit guys, holy shit holy shit”

The dialogue happened after the enemy team Newbee has lost to Team Liquid and all Team Liquid has emotional outburst of happiness after a clean sweep series beating Newbee 3-0 in the Grand Final on The International, Miracle- shouting “Nice” and slam the desk and hug the other player afterwards, as it happened Matumbaman is still in shock the fact that their team has won The International 2017 by saying repeatedly “Holy shit”. The word “Holy shit” is an emotional burst of excitement and happiness coming from Matumbaman knowing that they just won the biggest tournament at that time.

Emphatic swearing

This type is what Andersson and Trudgill (1990, p. 61) call it as auxiliary swearing or lazy swearing. The structure of this swearing is *fucking* or *bloody* which is followed by other linguistic elements. According the usage, this type helps a speaker to express his or her emotion in an adjectival or adverbial manner through a taboo expression, for instance. Damn, hell, fuck, or shit. This swearing is accordingly not aimed to hurt and does not directed to a specific addressee considering that the term is only used to express an individual emotion. For instance, this is fucking amazing! Pinker (2007, p. 350).

The illustration is regarded as emphatic swearing because of reasons. First, there is an intention to abuse nobody. It can be seen from the word *fucking* which is used as an attributive for the adjective *amazing*, and not directed to a particular addressee. Second, *fucking* reflects the swearer’s feeling of excitement.

The word in the utterance spoken by KuroKy has found to be containing a profanity word, which in this case the word is *fucking*.

Coach : I’d just like to remind you guys, this is our only TI finalist speaking so he’s an authority.

KuroKy : I waited four fucking years for this day. This time we’re gonna rewrite history.

The dialogue still in the same scene as Datum 01, KuroKy doing speech for the team to cheer up the situation and make the team energy more hyped up in the Grand Final, as the Coach told the other player that KuroKy is worthy to speak up the speech as he said “This is our only TI finalist speaking so he’s an authority” and then at the end of the speech KuroKy

said, “I waited four fucking years for this day” means that he already preparing for this specific The International to win this one, KuroKy itself already participate every year in The International history since 2011.

The function of fucking in KuroKy’s line “I waited four fucking years for this day” is to emphasize a point the fact that he waited four years for this. Finally, the utterance “I waited four fucking years for this day” is an utterance that made by KuroKy as he gave the team a speech, the word *fucking* in his utterance is to emphasize his point on waiting four years

Conclusion

Based on the research findings and discussion, some conclusions can be formulated as follows. Concerning the objective of the study which is identifying the types of the profanity in documentaries video True Sight, 5 types of profanity are found which are Abusive Swearing, Idiomatic Swearing, Dysphemistic Swearing, Cathartic Swearing and Emphatic Swearing. The profanity types of Emphatic Swearing are dominated in this research because it is used for emphasizing the word after the profanity. Emphatic Swearing is found 9 times out of 30 representative data. The lowest frequency of types of profanity applied in this research is Dysphemistic Swearing with only 4 data.

The player uses the profanity in documentaries video of True Sight mostly in order to express their phrase more informal to show the casual diction that the players utter in daily life on the community.

Regarding the third objective of the research which is to know which types of profanity that used the most by the professional player. The writer found the Emphatic Swearing has dominated the types out of 30 representative data. It shows 9 times out of 32 of the total types that has been analyzed. The reason that the amount of representative data and the total types that has been analyzed did not matched is because there are two data that has double types of profanity in the utterance.

The reason that the Emphatic Swearing is the dominant of all the types that available, it is simply put that the gaming community is an informal environment, the same as people who speak with their friends. Emphatic swearing is the type that gives an option to emphasize more on a particular word which in the case of the gaming community especially the competitive one, Emphatic swearing sure is needed to express a point or statement and emphasizing it to another level.

The impact of using profanity related the use of language attitude is to understand and comprehend more on using the language itself knowing when or where to use the language and aware on how the conversation goes between the speaker and listener. By introducing this, speakers will decide whether they would use profanity or not depending on the condition and situation they involved. It will be their choice as they are smart enough knowing its contents & functions now.

References

- Baruch, Y. a. (2007). Swearing at work and permissive leadership culture. *When anti-social becomes social and incivility is acceptable*, 492-507.
- Chaika, E. (1999). *Linguistics, Pragmatics and Psychotherapy_A Guide for Therapist*. Londong: Whurr Publishers Ltd.
- Hastings-Duffield, H. G. (2015). *Reuben and Women*. New York: Page Publishing Inc.
- Jay, T. (1992.) *Cursing in America*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing.
- Jay, T. (2009). Perspective on Psychological Science. *The Utility and Ubiquity of Taboo*, 153-161.

- Kaye, B. K., & Sapolsky, B. S. (2004). Offensive Language in Prime-Time Television: Four Years After Television Age and Content Ratings . *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 554-569.
- LJung, M. (2011). *Swearing: A Cross-Cultural Linguistic Study*. England: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Loveday, L. (1982). *The sociolinguistics of learning and using a non-native language*. New York: Pergamon Press.
- McEnery, T. (2006). *Corpus-based Language Studies: An Advanced Resource Book*. Canada: Routledge.
- Pinker, S. (2007). *The Stuff of Thought Language as a Window into Human Nature-Viking*. London: Penguin Books.
- Stephens, R., & Umland, C. (2011). Swearing as a Response to Pain—Effect of Daily Swearing. *The Journal of Pain*, 1274-1281.
- Wallace, D. P., & Fleet, C. J. (2012). *Knowledge into Action: Research and Evaluation in Library and Information Science*. California: ABC-CLIO.