CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

An overview of the research is given in this chapter, which first explains the background of the investigation before identifying and formulating the challenges. It also describes the goals that will be achieved by the research and the potential theoretical and practical benefits that this study may provide.

A. Background of the Study

Swearing is part of the variety of language that people often use to communicate orally or in writing. According to Martínez (2022), EFL learners can usually encounter swear words through movies, books, social media. Rahmawati (2013) also stated that the function of swear words in EFL learners is as their expressive side. This is done to show that language is a means of communication and applies to various languages. Swearing is one of the taboo languages where its use during communication and interaction is used to release emotional feelings according to Jay (1992, 2000) as cited in Timothy & Janschewitz (2008). Supported by the statement from Oxford Dictionaries that swearing is rude and offensive language. Although those have a strong negative connotation, the fact that they can release one's emotional side is a good sign and can also be considered as therapy for ourselves when we look at it from a psychological point of view as stated by Giffin (2016). This variation can be part of support the closeness of the relationship between the speaker and his/her speech partner which forming friendliness between them.

The topic of swear words has been discussed in several previous studies. One of the studies conducted by Andang & Bram (2018) on how many Swear words or frequency are thrown according to COCA (Corpus of Contemporary American English) and the implications of Swear words with the potential positive functions that can be used for EFL learners and researchers in using them in formal environments. On the other hand, research from Friyanto & Ashadi (2020) examined how swear words can be acquired and used by EFL learners and the

purpose of using them in formal settings. Although some previous studies found how those can be acquired along with their implications in the formal sphere, there is no research that discusses cultural sensitivity to the use of them in formal and informal spheres.

However, on the other hand, the negative impression of swear words is sensitive on different cultural understandings. The reason is when speakers utter them, they must have a purpose and context in mind. On the other hand, according to research from Husna (2020) and Amrullah (2016), different environmental backgrounds, ages, genders, and social statuses will also have different perspectives when swear words are uttered. This is exacerbated by the freedom of expression on social media that triggers everyone to say what they want to say. But if they have similar environmental backgrounds, they feel swear words are common and the speaker who utters them feel it is part of an expression release for social recognition (Husna, 2020). But when viewed from the culture and norms, the culture of using swear words contradicts the prevailing cultural norms in Indonesia, because Indonesia itself is a country which is directly related to hospitality and manners and has a character in accordance with the precepts in Pancasila. In line with a statement from an expert who said that in Indonesian culture, manners are closely related to language expression and one of the important aspects in education (Prasetio et al., 2024). In addition, when viewed in terms of legal norms in the Pancasila principles in the second principle, it is stated that "Just and civilized humanity".

Therefore, it needs supervision from teachers and agencies as well as support from the curriculum to overcome the use of swear words. When viewed from an educational point of view, this is a challenge, especially for teachers to provide an understanding of the use of language in accordance with its context to their students so that they realize the importance of using language in accordance with its context. The importance of teaching them to students or even the public is in line with the curriculum in Indonesia, the Merdeka Curriculum. EFL learners who may still consider this a taboo subject will be confused about the use of them. The policy in the Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes instilling character for students

by inserting character education in every subject Amalia & Najicha (2023) in order to develop and be loyal to the principles in the Pancasila values. On the other hand Mercury (1995) says that it is important for English Language Learners to understand the use of swear words whether in public or private settings and understand to whom those are used and in what situations. Supported by another expert statement that teaching Pragmatics material with the context of swear words cannot be done arbitrarily because it needs deeper knowledge to review material about them which is necessary for teachers and institutions and to contribute to each other with this educational policy (Salačová, 2019). Therefore, swear words can indeed be used to release emotions and express what is felt, but social norms and environmental influences play an important role in regulating them, especially for long-term social perceptions and interpersonal relationships (Farihan et al., 2024). So teachers and curricula can contribute to teaching Pragmatics about swear words as a new policy because it is important to be explored, directed and learned as new insights so that EFL learners can use them based on the correct context and meaning. In line with this, it is supported by Hymes (1972) that EFL learners can express sensitive language such as swear words appropriately as long as they know what situation, to whom, with what purpose, and what norms apply when expressing swear words in an interaction in order to avoid misunderstanding.

B. Formulation of the Problems

This study is based on the Whorfian Hypothesis, which states that language influences the way people think and perceive the world. In line with this statement, the communicative dynamics of swear words in an EFL learning environment will reflect how learners' linguistic categories and native culture influence the way they understand and use these words.

Research Question: What discourse patterns and discourse functions of swear words are in EFL context?

C. Operational Definitions

This operational definition contains the meaning of several explanations relevant to the topic of swear words and is in line with Dell Hymes' theory (1972) as cited in Ray & Biswas (2011) of communication competence with the "SPEAKING" model approach.

a) Definition of Swear Words

Swear words are expression conveyed verbally or non-verbally with a context that is impolite and far from the ethics and norms that exist in society. Swear words are usually used to express themselves such as anger, humor, disappointment, or familiarity in communication dynamics. In line with this, swear words do not only have literal meanings, but have many meanings in them depending on the context in which they are delivered. The sequence in which swear words are delivered has an influence that can make swear words have different meanings. The different meanings come from the reason and purpose of using the swear words. Someone can make swear words have different meanings if they have their own reasons and purposes.

b) Swear Words as Speech Event

Swear words as speech event refer to conversation activity in a certain community using swear words as its speech material. As we know that Swear words are things that have negative connotations, are impolite and far from ethics. So the use of swear words is very sensitive and causes misunderstanding when used with people who are not in the same scope. In line with this, this speech event is used as a bridge to analyze who is speaking, what is the purpose of the conversation that takes place, and what norms apply within the scope of a particular community. It can be correlated with Dell Hymes' speech event theory with the 'SPEAKING' model approach using the elements Participants (who is speaking), Ends (purpose of communication), Norms of Interaction (norms when interacting).

b) Discourse Patterns of Swear Words

In this study, the discourse patterns of swear words is explained as the sequence or arrangement when expressing swear words in a conversation in order to analyze and understand recurring structures and habits or trends in communicative dynamics. When correlated with the 'SPEAKING' model approach in Dell Hymes' theory, Act Sequence and Ends are the two elements that will explain how the patterns in swear words will be formed.

c) **Discourse Functions of Swear Words**

Discourse function on swear words in this study refers to the purpose or reason when using swear words in interactions within the scope of EFL learners. The function in this case is described by questions such as 'why' or 'for what purpose' swear words are uttered when communication is taking place. When correlated with the 'SPEAKING' model approach from Dell Hymes' theory, this function can be analyzed using the Ends element which aims to find out the reason why a form of swear words is uttered during communicative dynamics.

d) **EFL (English as a Foreign Language)**

EFL or English as Foreign Language is a term for students who are learning English as their foreign language. Interaction that occurs in EFL will generally occur if they have the same understanding. Especially when using swear words which are part of Linguistics in English. The relationship with Dell Hymes' theory of communicative competence is that success in communication does not only rely on grammatically, but must also be supported by the ability to understand the purpose, social context, culture, and Pragmatic language in order to create harmonious communication interactions.

e) **Interaction Challenges from Linguistic View**

Interaction challenges are the process of understanding when EFL learners use swear words with peers. Usually there will be obstacles or problems when throwing them if the two parties are not in the same connection or power level. Based on Dell Hymes' theory, interaction challenges can exist and occur due to differences in culture and norms. And it can affect the success of communication as well as on language comprehension among EFL learners.

D. Aims of the Study

The purpose of this study is to find out what discourse patterns and functions of swear words in EFL context.

E. Significances of the Study

a. Theoretical use

The purpose of this research is to contribute to the literature on swear words in EFL contexts. Both underlining the meanings built in such terms and providing insights into how societal norms and rules influence their use are provided. Contributing to the Pragmatic understanding of language use in social interactions among EFL learners, the study examines the functions of swear words in conversation. Furthermore, the results can be used as a guide by future scholars who want to investigate sociolinguistic aspects of language functions, especially those related to language identity, power relations and politeness techniques. Additionally, this study enhances theoretical developments in the intrepertation of speech events in various cultural and educational contexts by employing Dell Hymes' 'SPEAKING' model as a framework.

b. Practical use

The results of this study help EFL students understand when and where to use swear words. This practical knowledge can improve learners'

ability to communicate in an organized and socially acceptable way by making them more aware of the roles that language plays in various circumstances. Learners can become more sensitive and responsible when choosing their words druing communication by being aware of the possible effects that using swear words may have on those listening. This is especially crucial in academic and cross-cultural settings because language use has relational and social implications.

c. Empirical use

This study provides a new understanding of the context of using swear words in formal and informal settings and to be more aware of the importance of speaking words in the right context. In line with the education system in Indonesia, namely the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes character education for students, the character of politeness is something that must be developed by students and it is hoped that teachers will take swear words seriously, such as creating materials about them to become a form of reference or direction for EFL learners so that they do not use these words carelessly.