

Forms and Functions of Swearing Words Uttered by Santris of MBI, Mojokerto

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Abstract. This study is conducted to reveal the form and function of cursing uttered by students of pesantren or santris. The subjects of the study are santris from MBI of Amanatul Ummah Pesantren in Pacet, Mojokerto, both males and females. The data are taken from their utterances at whatsapp group. The data are analyzed qualitatively to reveal the form and function of cursing words uttered by santris. The result shows that there are few forms uttered by santri grading from the most fairest ones to the harshest ones depending on the context of the situation. The curse words also function differently depending on the context of situation, as it may shows being surprised and disbelief, showing solidarity, making a joke, and expressing anger and disappointment.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

This study is designed to be conducted at *Madrasah Berstandar Internasional Pesantren Amanatul Ummah*, here after will be mentioned as MBI AU in Pacet Mojokerto. As many of commoners understand, those who are studying at *pesantren* are called santris, although they may also go to the typical schools as other students do, so as the students of MBI AU.

As santris, students of MBI AU keen on the basic principles of teachings which emphasize on the brotherhood, selflessness, simplicity in living and self-sufficiency [1]. which persist with their good morality values. One of the morality values is that santris must force themselves to stay away from any bad behaviors or immorality [2]. Therefore, santris are being known for their politeness, both in their behaviors and their talks. In *pesantren* in Java, the use of Javanese krama is very prevalent because it is the highest form of honorific languages appropriate to be used to show much respect and politeness toward others [3].

In as much as santris want to show their refinement behavior, they are high schools students aged between 15 - 18 which are accessible for anything evolves around their teenage lives. Similar to teenagers of their age, santris also have communities in which they are communicating with linguistic forms mostly appropriate to be used.

One of linguistic forms uttered by santris is the use of swearing words. Swearing is defined as “rude or offensive language that someone uses, especially when they are angry” [4]. The javanese dictionary also has the same definition of swearing words, although it does not mention about the speaker being angry. So in javanese language, swearing or *pisuhan* is defined as the harsh or rude words used to ridicule and is considered as impolite words [5].

1.2 Previous Studies

Previous studies have been conducted on different languages. Sudaryanto, et.al [6], Kisyani [7], and Wijana & Rohmadi [8] are working on how swear words in Bahasa Indonesia, meanwhile Saptomo [9] and Indrawati [10] are studying on swear words in Javanese language

and Madurese language respectively. Studies of swear words in Bahasa Indonesia show that swear words have phatic function [6], and that they are reflecting the speakers' feeling and attitude [7]. Saptomo [9] shows that swear words in Javanese language have specific functions and references. Similarly, swear words in Madurese language also have specific references and values [10].

There is also a common belief that swear words are commonly used by males, rather than by females, assuming that females are holding the values better. However, a study, focusing on the data taken in South Africa, strongly challenges the assumption that women stick to the standard speech, and shows that young females are familiar with and use a wide range of taboo or slang items themselves [11]. Likewise, Risch [12] also finds that women are not necessarily more prone to the use of standard forms of speech, and she suggests that the standard or non standard distinction is actually more appropriately applied to whether the setting is public or private rather than whether it is said by men or women.

As using standard or non standard words are correlated more with the setting and not the participant [12], Jay [13] conducted a study testing the use of swear words in public setting. He reveals that swearing is positively correlated with extroversion and being hostile, and negatively correlated with agreeableness, conscientiousness, religiosity, and sexual anxiety. He further concludes that the swear words readily facilitate people with words to communicate emotion information especially anger and frustration. Another study conducted by LeSourd & Quinn [14] also suggest that swear words in Maliseet-Passamaquoddy language are mostly used to indicate anger, annoyance, scorn, impatience or intensity. However, they also find that swear words can be used in humorous way to show approval or to show that two individuals have particular close relationship.

2 Method

The subject of the study are santris studying at MBI AU both males and females, of grade XII. There are 29 males santris and 26 females santris. Although they come from different parts of Indonesia, they mostly communicate in Javanese language in their what-apps group. This may be because they have been staying in pesantren for almost 3 years, and

most of santris are from East Java, hence the use of Javanese with Suraboyoan dialect is very prevalent.

The data are taken from their utterances at whats-app group from 2022 - 2023. It should be understood that these santris are not taking their mobile phones to pesantren, and hence the data were only collected when they were having breaks from pesantren. The what apps group is exclusively for males and for females only, so there is no interaction between males and females.

2 Result

2.1 Forms of swear words

The data analyzed in this study show that both male and female santris swear, with notion that male santris swear more and harsher compared to females as in the following table:

No.	References	Forms of male swear words	Forms of female swear words
1	Others	-	Nggenah ki ; Ealah ;Astaga naga; Astaghfirullah ; Ebusset
2	Family kin	-	Cak - cak; Bu
3	Plants	Kacang - kacang - kacang ; Asem	-
4	Bad creature	Fir'aun ; Dajjal	Dajjal
5	Sexual reference	Jancok -- cuk-- cok - -- cuok	Slebew; Cuk
6	Animal	Ngebo ; Angkrik ; Anjing -- anjir, njir - - anjay -- njay Asu -- su ; Babi	Anjrit -- anjir -- anjay -- njay --- anjrot -- njrot ; Nyuk ; Su
7	Characte- ristics	Alay; Gaje; Mbamble; Tolol; Blok ; Ndeng	Alay; Mayak; Mbamble; Ndol; Tolol; Bego; Goblok
8	Parts of bodies	Bacod ; Ndasmu; Motomu -- matane;Taek	Cot ; Telek

As it can be seen from table, the swear words are grouped into 8 references ranging from the fairest to the harshest one. However, in each case, those words may represent different degree of emotion based on the context situation. Males use more varieties of words.

2.2 Function of swear words

There are several contexts where swear words are used. The obvious meaning of swearing is to express anger, as can be seen in the following examples

Datum 15

Bijoe: **Jancokkk**. ‘jancokk’

Bijoe: *HE REK JEK NIAT TA GAK IKI PKSB NE* ‘HE, GUYS, DO WE STILL HAVE THE INTENTION IN MAKING PKSB EVENT?’

In datum 15, Bijoe is angry because he has been waiting for everyone to show up at zoom meeting but only a few come. So he swears and yells by typing words in capital letters to express his anger.

Closely similar to being angry, santris may also swear when they feel disappointed. As can be seen in data 12 and 13 below, Bijoe is swearing *jangkrik* and *kacang - kacang - kacang* to express his disappointment. At this context, the swear words are uttered in a lighter way than when it is used to express anger, because at this context Bijoe is complaining to himself and is not necessarily yelling to his friends in anger.

Datum 12

Bijoe: **Jangkrik**. *Nang ndi ae lur sing liyane* ‘jangkrik. Where are the others?’

Ktz: *Wkwkwk*

Datum 13

Bijoe: *Kurang 11* ‘11 people have not shown up’

Bijoe: **Kacang kacang kacang** ‘peanut peanut peanut’

Another expression of disappointment is the use of the word *astaghfirullah*, an Arabic expression used to ask for mercy from God, as can be seen in datum 20 below. Here, instead of uttering swear word, Cipe said *astaghfirullah* to express her impatient feeling. Many santris, especially girls are not feeling easy in swearing, thus using this expression is considered more solemn and are more accepted.

Datum 20

Nadia: *Kene mudun ikhac tp barang e taruh MBI, kon iku di mudun no nk ikhac, trus bapak mu nk bi ngeduk no barang muu, ngunu lo syg* ‘you need to get off at ikhac, but your belongings must be put at MBI. So you get off at ikhac, then your father takes your belonging to MBI, that’s it honey’

Cipe Mbi'15: *Berarti sen nde ikhac kene tok? Astaghfirullah.*

Ruwet ‘so, the one who get off at ikhac is only me?’

Astaghfirullah. What a troublesome.’

Swearing is also uttered by santris to mock others. In datum 7 below, it can be seen that Ariel is reciting a hadist to stop Ktz from revealing their friend’s badness, but Ktz doesn’t care, and utters the word *babi*, mocking Ariel for pretending to be solemn. Similarly, in datum 2, When Aryo says that he is withdrawing himself for being the member of the committee, Farandd also mocks Aryo with the word *gaje* - the abbreviation of the word *gak jelas* - a term used to label someone who is not having a clear purpose in his mind or in his behavior.

Datum 7

Ariel Uye: *Barang siapa yang menjaga aibnya seseorang, maka surga baginya* ‘whoever keeps other’s person bad things, he will be rewarded with heaven’

Ktz: *Bah wes. Babi* ‘I don’t care. Pig’

Datum 2

AryoErlang: *Sepurane aku metu kepanitiaan matsama* ‘I am sorry I am resigning from the committee’

Owl: *lho*

Farandd: *Gaje*

Particular swear words can also be used to make a joke, whenever the context is possible. Datum 23 below shows that the word *dajjal* ‘a demonic creature of the worst Moslem enemy’ is used as the swear word, by applying it to label keyboard which makes the writer misspelled the word she is typing. In this sense, the swearing becomes a joke because it is used to refers to things and in the end, it creates amusement. Likewise, the use of the swear word *anjir* in datum 27 is also used to respond to the amusement created by the previous utterances.

Datum 23

Bunga: *Nazila thea fira nasywa kutang satu lagi* ‘Nazila thea fira nasywa, bra one more?’

Nazila: *kutang???* ‘bra???’

Bunga: *Kurang. Mon maaf. Keyboard dajjal.* ‘less, I am sorry.

Keyboard dajjal.

Datum 27

Thea: *Inpo. Charger tipe C.* ‘information. Charger type C’

Fira : *Nek omah* ‘I have it at home’

Thea : **Anjir** ‘anjir’

Another function served the use of swear word is to express the state of being surprised as shown in data 3 and 4 below. In datum 3 Efa swear by saying *ebusettt anjir* because she is surprised that Dida is courageous enough to come back to pesantren very late. Similarly, Nisa is also uttering *astaga naga* to show her surprised of Santi’s courageous to come very late.

Datum 3

Dida Mbi’15: *engko bengi budal. Gaduk kunu isuk subuh* ‘ I will leave tonight. I ll get there by dawn’

Efa: **Ebusetttt anjir parah** ‘**Ebusetttt, anjir** the worst

Datum 4

Santi: *Aku sek nang malang* ‘I am still at Malang’

Nisa : **Astaga naga.** Molor ‘ **Astaga naga.** You are late’

Swear words are also uttered by santris to show solidarity. In datum 17, Apip jokingly swears and gives label to Ariel as Firaun to equate Ariel’s swear of labeling him as *ngebo* ‘being like buffalo’. In datum 11, Asropi shows his solidarity to Abiyu, by saying that Inem is dajjal and scolds him as not having a good manner because Inem says that it is not necessary to give any uniform to Abiyu, whereas Abiyu is the head of the committee. In all of these data, the tones of the swearing are in jokingly manner, and it is supported by the context that swearing is used particularly to show solidarity.

Datum 17

Ariel Uye: *Ealah, ngebo ae uripmu pip* ‘ Ealah, your life is like buffalo, pip’

Apip : *Dasar firaun* ‘ you are firaun’

Datum 11

Inem 15: *Abiyu gausah* ‘let’s not give any to Abiyu’

Asropi: *Pengawuran non adab* ‘you ve got no manner’

Asropi: **Dajjal kau.** ‘you are dajjal.

In terms of function, more male santris uttered swear words to express

anger and disappointment than female santris. In addition, more swear words having ruder meaning such as, *asu*, *cok/jancok*, *motomu*, *ndasmu* are used by male santris to make a joke or to show solidarity. Meanwhile, female santris are using swear words mostly for joking. None of the swear words uttered by female santris is used to express anger towards other santris. Female santris also prefer to use fairer forms of swear words to soften her tones or even is using more polite forms to replace the intended swear words.

4 Conclusion

Santris of MBI AU uttered swear words in many forms with different functions based on the context. They uttered a wide range of swear words, but the intensity of the words are not determined solely by the meaning and the reference of the swear words, but instead on the whole context that determined the meaning of the swear words. The swear words are used to express anger when they are talking or precisely yelling at the hearer, but it becomes an expression of disappointment when it is used without referring it to the hearer. Swear words are also used to mock others when there is sense of humor and joke. With this, swear words can also be used to show solidarity. Specifically, santris also used the words *firaun*, and *dajjal* as words to swear, and they also used the phrase *astaghfirullah* to replace the intended swear words.

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