

A Contrastive Analysis on Taboo Words in English And Minangkabau Language

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| Fachri Yunanda^{1,*} | Saptari Wibowo² | Jimmi Amanda Aritonang³ |

¹Faculty of Teaching Training and Education, Universitas Prima Indonesia, Medan, Indonesia

²Faculty of Cultural Studies, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia

³Post Graduate of Communication, Universitas Muhammdiyah Sumatera Utara

*fachriyunanda@unprimdn.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study focuses on a contrastive analysis of taboo words in English and Minangkabau, an Indonesian language spoken in Sumatera Barat. This study aimed to identify, categorize, and compare the differences between taboo terms used in Minangkabau and English. This study's research methodology was descriptive qualitative. Three procedures were used to carry out this study. The data for taboo terms in English was first prepared using literature, film, and native speakers staying in Medan, Sumatera Utara, whereas the data for taboo words in Minangkabau was prepared using literature, research, and local speakers in Bonjol, Pasaman, Sumatera Barat. Second, talking to several informants on the meaning of the banned terms to gain the full meaning. Third, the Wardhaugh theory was used to examine all the data, and the Lado Theory was used to compare the data to identify similarities and contrasts. According to the study's findings, there are five categories of taboo words in the Minangkabau language, including those that are connected to sex, animals, death, and excrement. They were distinct from the English words for sex, animal functions, human bodily parts, death, excrement, and religion.

KEYWORDS

Taboo Words; English and Minangkabau Language; Contrastive Analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Communication requires a strong command of language. In our culture, words may be used to convey our delight, anxiety, pleasure, or contentment. In a way, language serves as a medium of communicating information, ideas, thoughts, or feelings. Language can serve as a channel of communication between community members in the form of arbitrary voice symbols or speech sounds as well as sound symbols created depending on what people say. (Cowie & Cornelius, 2003).

Sociolinguistics is a field of study that looks at how language and society interact with the goal of better understanding how languages are structured and used in communication. (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2021)

Taboo is a component of sociolinguistics, which deals with the interaction between language and society. Taboo words are those that are not seen favorably by society or are better avoided because they make reference to inappropriate and insulting facts. Taboo refers to something that is forbidden, hazardous, or forbidden because it violates societal norms and religious beliefs. Taboo words are considered to be inaccurate and to be unpleasant and aggressive language, hence they are not allowed to be spoken. (Razavi et al., 2010)

Humans must constantly be aware of the parameters and circumstances under which they are operating while communicating ideas or thoughts through language. Misuse of language or even a choice of words can result in misconceptions that frequently result in communal strife. For this reason, one should consider the conditions and customs that occur in various civilizations before communicating. It is intended that by paying attention to these standards, he would be able to pay attention to the words he chooses to use in conversation. Because certain words, even those that do not go against the grain in one community, might mislead when employed in another. For instance, the term "bunting" would have a negative connotation in Javanese culture if it were applied to a lady who becomes pregnant unintentionally before being married. However, among the Betawi people, the phrase is frequently applied to describe pregnant women. (Husda & Saragih, 2021)

The language taboo exists for a variety of reasons, including etiquette, good manners, politeness, and compassion, in addition to superstitions and beliefs. In addition, taboo refers to a societal ban on words, items, behaviors, or individuals that are deemed unacceptable by a community, culture, or even society. (Nasution & Mulyadi, 2021). Taboo prohibits any action or statement since it is improper and occasionally offensive. Taboo may result in feelings of shame, dishonor, and uneasy or harsh behavior in society. The idea of taboo can apply to both words and acts in addition to just words. A obviously forbidden behavior will result in retribution from the society or sin for the offender (punishment from God).

If, for instance, they are used for comedy among close-knit social groups, then the usage of taboo terms might not be illegal. As a result, this analysis cannot separate the spoken utterance's context from it. The utterance is susceptible to breaking the law if there is no personal connection between the speaker and his interlocutor or if humor is not intended. Consequently, this study is one of the literatures that encourages individuals to use greater caution when speaking a language.

Interestingly, no one has definitively determined how even a kid picks up on word taboos. Undoubtedly, no one is familiar with prohibited phrases from birth. Only until a person has reached adulthood and is conscious of social norms is this possible. Through the socialization of speech patterns, people acquire an oral or folk knowledge about acceptable cursing behavior.

The purpose of this research's study of taboo words is to determine the categories of taboo terms used in both English and Minangkabau. "Tabu Words in English and the Toutemboan Language" by Manoreh (2002). He employed the theories of Trudgil (1874:13), Wardhaugh, and Claire (1983:2-3) in his research (1986:30). He came to the conclusion that people used banned phrases to communicate their annoyance, rage, and that some utterances had a curse-like quality to them. The information was gathered through informants who were in the village of Toutemboan. Rondonuwu's "Tabu Words in English and Tonsea: A Contrastive Analysis" is another resource (2004). In his research, Trudgil (1974:29), Fromkin-Rodman (1983:226:267), and Wardhaugh (1986:229_230)'s theories were all utilized. He came to the conclusion that banned phrases might be used to humiliate as much as vent rage. Informants who were at Tonsea village provided the data.

Based on a review of the background material, there are two main reasons for conducting this study: 1. to identify the kinds of taboo words in English and Minangkabau language and to categorize them into some categories, such as sex, human body functions, animals, death, excretion, and religion; and 2. to determine the differences between taboo words in English and Minangkabau language. On the basis of Lado and Wardhaugh's (2006) summary of taboos in synthesizing theory, those issues would be resolved.

The study of taboo words could shed light on the sociolinguistics phenomenon that every speaker of a particular language has their own ideology under the concepts of taboo

language, where it is possible to address something that is not only humiliating and offensive but also causes strong negative emotional reactions.

RESEARCH METHODS

This section's goal was to demonstrate the process based on the previously developed issues. The descriptive qualitative approach was used in this investigation. It discussed the contrastive examination of taboo terms in the Minangkabau and English languages. This descriptive research examined the data using natural semantic and sociolinguistic methodologies, as well as the fact that the data is a collection of lexemes with significant units that are common in society. Researchers use the issues raised in this research as indications for conclusions and discussion that include the following.

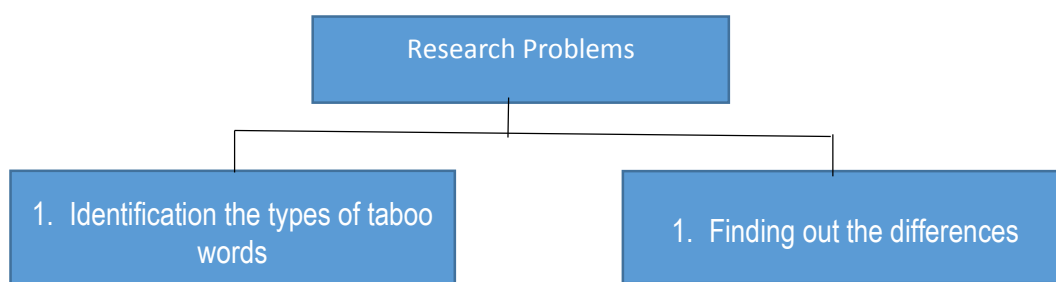


Figure 1. Research Problems

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Taboo words in English

1. Taboo Words Related to Sex

The term "sex" is etymologically derived from the Latin "sexus" which was later revealed to be Old French "sexe". This term is a medieval English text that can be traced to the period 1150-1500 AD. The use of taboo words related to sex depends on the factors that influence the occurrence of these words, i.e. the situation, the level of familiarity of the speaker and so on. (Braidotti, 2002)

Example:

- **Fuck**
What the **fuck** are you talking about?

The word "fuck" has a sexual or intimate origin. The term "fuck" is categorized as non-formal language since it is only used by adult individuals who are aware of its meaning. When used in official contexts or when youngsters use it to address adults or vice versa, the term is prohibited.

2. Taboo Words Related to Functions of the Parts of Human Body

Body components and functions, or regular physical processes that take place in the human body, are referred to as "body functions." Some human bodily processes are forbidden since they deal with a person's private parts, however they are frequently spoken in public or inappropriately.

Example:

- Dick
Your dick looks exciting.
- Pussy

Get out from here, pussy.

- **Butt**

Oh no, you have a very big **butt**.

Dick, pussy, and butt are considered forbidden words when spoken in front of a large crowd because they violate the standards of etiquette that are expected in the English-speaking culture.

a. Taboo Words Related to Animals

The usage of such prohibited phrases will draw criticism from society for placing humans in the same status as animals.

Example: **Pussy** = Your wife is like a rat **pussy**

For English speakers, the term "pussy" is offensive. It is impolite to use the term, which alludes to "female genitalia," especially in formal settings. This phrase may also mean "cowardice," and since it refers to a woman's genitalia, a male who is unwilling to express his emotions or undertake difficult tasks is compared to a woman. This phrase is used to make fun of other people.

b. Taboo Words Related to Death

Death is the conclusion of life, and it's frequently seen as a danger to people's lives. This term is banned because it is frequently thought of as a word that makes people feel uneasy. This phrase can also be used to indicate disappointment or submission.

Example: **Death**=The **death** of my grandfather made my grandmother dying. For English speakers, the term "die" or "death" is forbidden since it is viewed as frightening. This phrase can also be used to indicate disappointment or submission.

c. Taboo Words Related to Excretion

The process of eliminating the remainder of the body's metabolism is known as excretion. Excretion is regarded as a taboo term because the waste materials (feces and urine) are seen to be dirty or repulsive to mention to the other person and are frequently used in situations where it is inappropriate.

Example : **Shit** = I know that you slept with that girl, **shit**.

People who use the term *shit* are viewed as taboo and lacking in etiquette, hence it should be avoided in casual conversations and especially at meals.

d. Taboo Words Related to Religion

Every religion forbids saying specific phrases in order to avoid using God's name in vain. Because they think the name has mystical powers, they think that using it carelessly might result in curses.

Example: **God** = Oh **God**, it's a beautiful gown.

The term "God" is forbidden because it should not be used casually in English-speaking society, especially by Christians. It is deemed impolite to use this term and insulting to God.

Taboo words in Minangkabau Language

Bonjol is the name of a district in Indonesia's Sumatera barat province's Minangkabau Regency (kabupaten Pasaman). Because of its proximity to the equator, it is particularly well-known. Tuanku Imam Bonjol, a national hero in the war against Dutch control, was also born in Bonjol. Farmers make up over 75% of the population. About 60 kilometers north of Bukittinggi, near the Trans-Sumatran Highway, is where Bonjol is located. Every bus

traveling the equator-crossing route between Medan and Bukittinggi (or Padang) passes through this area, which is primarily populated by Muslims.

Taboo Words Related to Sex

Rarely are terms associated with sex used in insults, but when individuals purposefully or inadvertently see sexual behavior and then talk about it with others, such words become exceedingly forbidden. It is definitely banned to use those words, especially if a younger speaker uses them in front of a large audience. Because they go against social ideals of decency, these taboo words bring about consequences from society.

Example: **Barancuak (fuck/having sex)** *Sakik kapalo den, si Epi lah barancuak lo jo si Hen.* (I get a headache, Epi had a sex with Hen last night.)

Taboo Words related to the functions of parts of human body

Every human being has both internal and exterior reproductive organs, as well as some bodily parts that should not be used for speech. Speaking about this body part appears prohibited since it is viewed as being quite rude.

- **Pantek induak ang (fuck your mother)**
Pantek induak ang, Alah sudah hutang den samo ayah ang yo (Fuck your mother, I had paid my debt to your father)
- **Godok (penis)**
Kancing sarawa ang batua batua lah, bia ndak nampak godok ang tu (zip your trousers on unless everybody can see your penis)
- **Lancirik (butt)**
Padusi tu mamakai sarawa cabiak, sahinggo nampak lancirik nyo (The girl is wearing torn pants, so her butt shows up)

The words above refers to areas of the human body that are not visible to the naked eye, but depending on the context, it may also signify a terrible curse, extremely harsh or furious sentiments, feelings of astonishment, or even pleasantries.

Taboo Words related to animals

The usage of taboo terms associated with animals is occasionally accepted as usual in the community of Bonjol people. However, there are certain terms that are extremely disrespectful to someone and have highly nasty connotations, such as:

Examples:

- **Kabau (cow)**
Badan lah samo lo jo kabau nampak dek den ma. (You are as big as a cow)
- **Kapuyuak (cockroach)**
Kama jo ang lai kapuyuak (where are you going, cockroach)
- **Anjiang (Dog)**
Elok-elok selah ang bajalan tu anjiang (Be careful while walking, dog)
- **Kandiak (pig)**
Parangai ang bantuak kandiak (your behavior is like a pig)

The terms *kabau*, *kapuyuak*, *anjiang*, and *kandiak*, which once denoted animals, now apply to insults. Due of its frequent usage as an insult or in times of annoyance, this term is considered forbidden.

Taboo Words related to Death

For some society, death is like bad news that is unsettling and unsettling. As a result, discussing death-related topics is frowned upon in the Bonjol village community. The taboo word is regarded as extremely frightful and is prohibited to utter.

Examples: **Mampuih (die)** = *Mampuih ang, lah den kecek an...jan kancang2 juo.* (Jerk, I told you not to speed).

Because the Minangkabau term *mampuih* signifies "death" and frequently causes fright in its hearers, this word has been tabooed. When used in an irate manner, the word *mampuih* has also transformed to imply "asshole, jerk, savage." Therefore, it is forbidden to use this word recklessly, especially in public.

Taboo Words related to Excretion

Speaking informally or in front of a large crowd while using forbidden terms connected to excrement is extremely rude. There are terms associated with excretion that are prohibited in the Minangkabau language.

Examples:

- **Salemo (nasal mucus)**
Hapuih lah salemo tu, jan kumuah bana waang (clean your nasal mucus, it is disgusting)
- **Ciriak (shit)**
Jan gelo maota jo ang, ongok ang baun ciriak (Shit, you'd better shut up)
- **Kanciang (pissing)**
Konciang dek kau jan maiwuak jo ang (Fuck you, don't make a noise)

For Bonjol people, the word *salemo*, *ciriak*, and *kanciang* are considered very bad and not appropriate to say when eating or against food and in formal situation, because it is considered disgusting. This word is also a taboo word, because often used as a very rude cursing when upset to insult another person.

CONCLUSION

According to the findings of the analysis, classification, and identification processes, it was discovered that both the English and Minangkabau languages had a variety of taboo terms.

Referring to the Wardhaugh theory, there were 6 types of taboo words found in English. They are related to:

1. Sex
2. The Functions of the Parts of Human Body
3. Animals
4. Death
5. Excretion
6. Religion

While in Minangkabau Language, there were found only 5 types of taboo words. They are related to:

1. Sex
2. The Functions of the Parts of Human Body
3. Animals
4. Death
5. Excretion

The type 6, Taboo words related to Religion, was not found in Minangkabau language, especially among the Bonjol people as they are religious people who dare not speak any negative words related to their religion. The use of words that are not suitable to the situation

and place of the conversation in progress may result in misunderstanding or feeling offended by the intended person. Basically, taboo words are words that contain meaning that is contrary to the norms of decency and applicable customs in an area.

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