

## EUPHEMISM OF TABOO LANGUAGE IN THE PANDHALUNGAN COMMUNITY IN SUKORAMBI DISTRICT, JEMBER

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### Abstract

Humans as social creatures cannot be separated from their interactions with each other. In interacting, humans use language as a communication tool. Language is a very important element in human life. The function of language as a communication tool is realized in the process of interaction between humans in social life. Language development is very dynamic. Therefore, new languages and new terms related to language may emerge. An example is the emergence of taboo languages. Taboo language is a group of words that are very sensitive to certain groups so that their use or pronunciation is avoided. Saying these taboo words can provoke other people's anger. Languages emerge from specific cultural areas. Jember is one of the areas where Pandhalungan culture is believed to exist. This research was conducted with the aim of analyzing the form of Tabu language used by the Pandhalungan community in the Sukorambi sub-district area, Jember. Apart from that, this research also analyzes the form of euphemization carried out by the Pandhalungan community in the Sukorambi sub-district area, Jember. Based on the data collected, the forms of taboo language used by the Pandhalungan people include the names of certain animals, supernatural creatures, physical disorders and mental disorders. The form of euphemization carried out is changing the way of pronunciation and changing taboo words to other acceptable words.

**Keywords:** Euphemization, Pandhalungan, Taboo Language

### A. INTRODUCTION

Humans whose status as social creatures cannot be separated from interacting with each other. In interacting, humans use language as a communication tool. Language is a very important element in human life. The function of language as a communication tool is fulfilled when there is a process of interaction between humans in social life. Therefore, Keraf (1997) identified several functions of language, including as a means of communication, self-expression and integration into certain situations or environments. Apart from that, language is also a tool of social control that can be used as a tool to adapt to the environment.

Language plays a very important role in human life. Language is used as a medium to convey views, ideas or concepts. Language is not only in the form of speech and writing, but also contains signs, sounds, symbols, codes, ciphers, etc., which have meaning in translation (Crystal, 2001). Chaer in his book (2006) shows that language as a means of communication, both spoken and written, is a system of symbols in the form of sounds or symbols that a society uses for cooperation, communication and identification.

On the other hand, language is an element of culture which also becomes an identity for that culture. Language is often said to be a product of a particular culture (Wicaksono &

Roza, 2015). Language also reflects values related to human life. The language used by each person depends on the environment in which they interact daily (Mehl et al., 2006).

Previously, Keraf (1997) stated that language functions as a communication tool, as a medium for expressing oneself, and integrating in certain situations or environments. So it can be concluded that the functions of language include the following:

- a. Communicative Function: The main function of language is to convey messages and enable communication between individuals or groups. Through language, people can share their information, opinions, feelings and ideas.
- b. Expressive Function: Language is used to express a person's emotions, feelings and personal attitudes. This allows individuals to convey joy, sadness, anger, anxiety, and various other emotional nuances.
- c. Cognitive Function: Language helps in human thinking, understanding and cognitive processes. Through language, we can build concepts, organize thoughts, solve problems, and develop an understanding of the world around us.
- d. Social Function: Language plays an important role in shaping social identity and human interactions. It allows us to build relationships with other people, acquire social norms, follow rules, and understand the culture and values held by society.
- e. Instructive Function: Language is used to provide instructions, directions, and practical information. This includes the use of language in education, instruction manuals, guides, and all kinds of instructions needed in everyday life.
- f. Artistic Function: Language is used for artistic purposes, such as in poetry, literature, drama, and other works of art. In this context, language is used to express beauty, imagination and creativity.

Language development is very dynamic. So, it is possible that new languages and new terms related to language will emerge. One example is the emergence of the Tabu language. Taboo language is a number of words that are avoided from being used or pronounced because they are very sensitive for certain groups. In fact, if these taboo words are spoken, they can cause anger in the person they are talking to. In the beginning, taboo language was something that was considered sacred and could not be touched or spoken because it was considered taboo or forbidden. However, from time to time the meaning has shifted (Parera, 2004). So the explanation emerged that taboo language can be defined as words or sentences that are capable of causing hurt or insulting, impolite, or rude. Apart from that, the use of taboo language can be used by speakers personally or interpersonally.

Taboo language, also known as abusive language, forbidden language, or foul language, is a type of language that contains words, expressions, or phrases that are considered impolite, vulgar, or contain content that is considered taboo in society. The term varies across cultures and languages, but generally refers to language that contains obscene language, insults, or derogatory language. Taboo language is often used in informal contexts, such as conversations between close friends or in informal situations. Although some people may use it for self-expression or humor, the use of taboo language may be considered inappropriate or offensive by others. So, it is important to remember that the use of taboo language must be adapted to the right context and audience (Sejdiraj, 2023). In formal, professional or public situations, it is highly recommended to avoid using taboo language so as not to offend or violate communication ethics (Allan & Burrige, 2006).

According to Parera, (2004) taboo language or words are associated with the prohibition on mentioning certain persons, animals and certain objects. From Parera's statement it can be interpreted that the forms of Tabu language include; obscene or abusive words, including words containing sexual content or vulgar references to body parts or sexual acts, insults or swearing, including harsh or degrading words used to insult or harass someone, words

containing hatred or racism, words or phrases that convey hatred, prejudice or discrimination against certain ethnic groups, races, religions or backgrounds, words or phrases that offend religions or beliefs such as insulting other people's religions or beliefs are also considered taboo in many societies. Derogatory or derogatory words or phrases include words used to insult or degrade someone based on their physical attributes, social status, or personal weaknesses. Insulting or intimidating language, namely in the form of words or phrases used to verbally intimidate, hurt or humiliate other people. On the other hand, according to Parera, taboo languages can be grouped based on the psychological motivation behind them; namely taboo that originates from fear, taboo that originates from something unpleasant, and taboo related to morality.

Because taboo language is prohibited from being spoken, sometimes in certain contexts, taboo language can be replaced with something more subtle, which is called euphemization or language refinement (Parera, 2004). Euphemization is the use of softer or more diplomatic words or expressions to refer to something that is considered taboo, inappropriate, or unpleasant. In line with what Parera said, Wibowo (2006) believes that several language experts agree to define the term euphemization as an expression that is smoother, more polite, or better, as a replacement for expressions that are felt to be rude, scary, taboo, or unpleasant. In other words, euphemization of taboo language is a way to replace or obscure words that are socially considered impolite, rude, or offensive by using more neutral or polite phrases. Common examples of euphemizations of taboo language include replacing the words "dead" with "passed away," "slovenly" with "unhygienic," or "crazy" with "special needs." This kind of euphemization is used to avoid saying words that are considered rude or offensive, making it more appropriate in formal situations or in more culturally or socially sensitive environments. The use of taboo language euphemizations can vary depending on the cultural context and applicable norms. What is considered a euphemization in one culture may be considered commonplace or straightforward in another culture.

As mentioned previously, language emerges from a particular cultural area. Jember is one of the areas that is said to have Pandhalungan culture, where the people are called the Pandhalungan people. According to Ayu Sutarto (2014), the Pandhalungan cultural area refers to the northern and eastern coastal areas of East Java Province, where the majority of the population has a Madurese cultural background. Pandhalungan society is a hybrid society, namely a society with a new culture as a result of a mixture of two equally strong or dominant cultures. In the context of Jember in East Java, Pandhalungan culture is a mixture of two dominant cultures, namely Javanese culture and Madurese culture.

In the Sukorambi sub-district area, Jember, East Java, taboo language is often used by people in everyday life, whether interacting with friends or used by individuals to express something. Therefore, this research was conducted to analyze how Tabu language is used and what forms of Tabu language are occasionally spoken by several people in the Sukorambi sub-district area. Apart from that, this research reveals the forms of euphemization of Tabu language carried out by the Pandhalungan community in the Sukorambi sub-district area.

## **B. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **The Relationship Between Taboo Language and Euphemism**

In various cultures, euphemism serves as a strategy to replace taboo language, particularly in social contexts that prioritize politeness and harmony. For instance, in discussions about death, phrases such as "has passed away" are often used instead of "died" to soften the negative connotations associated with the term. This choice of words not only reflects an effort to maintain politeness but also aims to provide comfort to the bereaved family (Kapron-King & Xu, 2021; Kiikshi & Suleimenova, 2021).

Beyond politeness, the use of euphemism is also influenced by social and cultural factors. In certain societies, replacing taboo language with euphemisms is a way to show respect for prevailing norms and values. For example, in cultures with strong beliefs in the afterlife, expressions such as "called by the Almighty" or "resting in peace" are more commonly used than "passed away" because they carry a deeper spiritual meaning (Nasution et al., 2023).

From a psychological perspective, euphemisms can help mitigate the emotional impact of taboo language. Research suggests that a speaker's emotional state can be affected by the use of words considered taboo, making euphemism an effective strategy to divert attention from distressing or frightening meanings. Thus, euphemisms are not merely a refined form of communication but also function as tools for shaping meaning in social interactions (Adaora & Ikegwuonu, 2022).

### **The Benefits of Using Euphemisms**

According to Ulfa (2015), the way we communicate in daily life significantly influences how our messages are received by others. Language not only reflects our thoughts but also conveys our attitudes and empathy toward our interlocutors. One widely used communication strategy for maintaining harmony is euphemism, which involves replacing words or phrases that may be perceived as harsh or unpleasant with more neutral or polite expressions. The use of euphemisms offers several benefits that enhance the quality of interactions, including:

a) **Avoiding Discomfort**

Euphemisms help create a more comfortable communication environment by reducing the negative impact of sensitive topics (Lestari & Sutrisno, 2023; Octavia et al., 2021; Tamba et al., 2019).

b) **Maintaining Politeness**

By using more refined expressions, individuals can demonstrate respect for their conversation partners, which is particularly important in social and professional settings (Kapron-King & Xu, 2021).

c) **Disguise Negative Meanings**

Euphemisms allow speakers to discuss difficult topics without causing distress or discomfort. For example, in the medical field, doctors often use the term "*unstable*" instead of "*critical*" to ease patients' and families' concerns (Charles & Ochieng, 2023; Oktafiana & Suhardi, 2024).

### **C. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This research uses a qualitative approach. Meanwhile, the method used is a case study. This is because this research aims to examine in depth the forms of Tabu language, how Tabu language is used, as well as the euphemization carried out by the Pandhalungan community in the Sukorambi sub-district area. Determining informants in this study applied a stratified random sampling technique, in which the population in the Sukorambi sub-district area was divided into 5 villages. Researchers will determine the sample as informants from each village in Sukorambi sub-district.

In this research, data collection was carried out using questionnaires, interview techniques and observation. The questionnaire used contains questions to gather information about forms of taboo language that are often used, how they use it in communication, and how euphemization of taboo language is carried out by the community in the Sukorambi sub-district area. Apart from that, interview techniques are also used to dig up deeper information about the data needed. The collected data was analyzed using Miles and Huberman's theory, namely by process, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing

conclusions. The data validity test uses data triangulation techniques, this aims to ensure that the data collected and submitted is very credible.

## **D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **A brief overview of Sukorambi District**

Sukorambi District is one of the sub-districts in Jember Regency, where the people of Jember are commonly known as the Pandhalungan people, namely a combination of two tribes, races or traditions that are equally strong. In Jember, one example in the Sukorambi sub-district, consists of a mixture of Madurese and Javanese tribes or races. So, the language used by the Sukorambi people is a mixture of Indonesian, Javanese and Madurese, for example: *ce' adoh e*. *Ce'* is a Madurese word which means very, while *adoh* is Javanese which means far. The phrase *ce' adoh e* is used to express very far away, but there is a mixture of Madurese and Javanese in one phrase.

### **Forms of Taboo Language**

Based on the results of the questionnaire, data was found that the forms of taboo language used by some Pandhalungan communities in the Sukorambi District, Jember Regency, can be grouped as follows:

#### **Animals Name**

Based on answers from questionnaires and direct interviews with several samples from five villages in the Sukorambi sub-district, all of them had the same answer, namely that they had the same view that there are certain animal names that are very taboo to say because the names of certain animals have meaning or connotations. negative. Like the word dog in Javanese *asu* and in Madurese *pate"*, cricket, goat and pig. In certain contexts and with certain intonation, saying the names of these animals can make someone offended, hurt, or even angry.

#### **Mystical or magical**

Words or phrases related to mystical or supernatural things that are sometimes used by people in the Sukorambi sub-district include devil and devil. This data was found when researchers directly interviewed several samples and made direct observations of several groups of teenagers in the Sukorambi sub-district area. The word devil is more often used when someone is angry with a friend for his actions.

#### **Physical abnormalities**

Physical abnormalities were found to still be used as an expression or expression for swearing in the Sukorambi sub-district area, especially among teenagers and children who are still in elementary school when communicating with their peers. An example of this is when the person speaking cannot hear, the words deaf in Indonesian and *kopok* in Madurese are sometimes expressed by the speaker. However, if asked why he said the word "*kopok*", he could not identify whether he meant it as a joke or felt angry because his words were not heard..

#### **Mental disorders**

Taboo words related to mental disorders or retardation are the words crazy and the words crazy. This word is often used when someone thinks another person is acting strangely and out of the ordinary. The words crazy and crazy are used when you are really angry.

#### **Certain terms or jargon**

Certain terms or jargon are words or phrases that are only known and used in communication by a certain group. One of the taboo words used by the Sukorabi people is the

word "jancok", which not everyone understands, because this term is only commonly known by the Pandhalungan people, namely the Madurese and Javanese.

### **Euphemization form**

Euphemization is a strategy in communication that aims to refine meaning. Based on data collected from questionnaires, interviews and observations, there are several types of euphemisms that are often uttered by the Pandhalungan community in the Sukorambi sub-district area.

### **Changing the way of pronunciation**

Changing the way of pronunciation means saying a new word that is very similar to the original word with the aim of making it more acceptable than the original word. Based on the results of interviews with residents in the Sukorambi sub-district area, the following are examples of words that are often used as puns:

The pronunciation of the word "dog" was changed to "anying" and "anjir".

The pronunciation of the word "asu" has changed to "asyem".

The pronunciation of the word "jancok" has been changed to "jancik" and "jasik".

### **Changing the word taboo to other words**

Based on data collected through questionnaires and interviews, it was also found that the euphemization carried out by residents in Sukorambi sub-district was by replacing taboo words with other words that were more subtle and acceptable. The following are examples of some of the word changes that were collected:

The word "dog" was replaced with the word "nervous".

The word "death" is replaced with the word "died" or "passed away".

The word blind has been replaced with the word "visually impaired".

The word "deaf" has been replaced with the word "deaf".

Based on the findings above, it can be concluded that euphemization is a strategy to refine meanings that were previously taboo to pronounce. This is in line with what was conveyed by Narwaya (2021), that euphemization is a tactic to change a certain meaning. Something or certain behavior that is actually bad can be overcome by using symbols or expressions to emphasize the positive aspects of the bad behavior or something.

From the results of data collection, the forms of taboo language that are often used in speaking by people in the Sukorambi sub-district area are the names of certain animals, supernatural creatures, physical disorders and mental disorders. Apart from that, the euphemization carried out by the Sukorambi people is changing the way of pronunciation, such as changing the pronunciation of the word dog to anjir and anying, as well as replacing taboo words with other words such as blind or impaired. This is in line with what was stated by Warren (1992) who divided euphemization into several types, namely word formation, phoneme modification, and loanwords. The explanation is as follows:

### **Words Formation**

Word formation can occur due to morphological and phonological processes of words. There are four types of word formation methods:

- a. Combining words replaces a less interesting term with a combination of two or more words that have a very subtle meaning.
- b. Derivation functions to produce new lexemes from various paradigms.
- c. An acronym, which is a combination of several initial syllables to get a new word that narrows the meaning of two or more actual words.
- d. Onomatopoeia is used to sharpen the meaning of words by using words that imitate natural or environmental sounds.

### **Phonemic Modification**

Phonemic modification is the replacement of part of a word to improve its meaning and sound Phoneme change format:

- a. Changing phonemes by reversing word order.
- b. Rhythmic words are the repetition of alternating sounds, usually placed at the end of adjacent sounds.
- c. Replace phonemes by replacing rough sounds with smooth sounds.
- d. An abbreviation consisting of the first letters of several words.

### **Loan words**

Loan words are the use of foreign words that are used to refine language or meaning. From Warren's explanation of euphemization above, it can be concluded that, in the Sukorambi sub-district, the euphemization carried out by several Pandhalungan communities in the Sukorambi sub-district area is word formation and phonemic modification. The formation of words is the words "anjir" and "anying". Meanwhile, phonemic modifications are the words "asyem" and "jasik". These two words are categorized as phonemic modifications because there is a change in sound from the original word "asu" which has a "u" sound to an "e" sound in the word "asyem". Meanwhile, in the word "jasik", there is a change in the sound from "o" to the sound "i", because the word "jasik" is a phoneme modification of the word "jancok".

Furthermore, based on the presentation of the data collected above, there is also a euphemization in the form of word formation which is included in the Onomatopoeia category. The word formation is the word "woof-guk" which is used to soften the word "dog". "Woof-woof" is a word that imitates the sound of the dog. With this euphemization of the word, the word "woof-guk" is more accepted in society when communicating than the word "dog" which is considered taboo.

### **E. CONCLUSIONS**

Taboo language is a word, phrase or sentence that is avoided in certain contexts because it is considered inappropriate to say or use in communicating between people. Often taboo language is used to joke with peers, even when someone wants to curse because they are angry. From data that has been collected through questionnaires, interviews and observations, words that are considered taboo in the Sukorambi sub-district area can be classified into several types, namely animal names, mystical or supernatural things, physical disorders, mental disorders and also certain terms.

In response to the use of taboo language in communication, the Pandhalungan people in Jember, especially in the Sukorambi District area, change taboo words to other words to make them more acceptable, known as euphemization. From the data that has been collected, the form of euphemization carried out by the Pandhalungan people in the Sukorambi sub-district area is by changing the way of pronunciation or what is known as phonemic modification, as well as forming new words that are considered more acceptable in the community than saying the word.

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