

## TABOO LANGUAGE IN MAENGGI KI'S *MY ID IS GANGNAM BEAUTY*

Oleh:

Ariyanti Silaen <sup>1)</sup>

Wenilia Halawa <sup>2)</sup>

Desmalia Purba <sup>3)</sup>

Universitas Darma Agung <sup>1,2,3)</sup>

*E-mail:*

[ari12silaen@gmail.com](mailto:ari12silaen@gmail.com) <sup>1)</sup>

[minsontamsar@gmail.com](mailto:minsontamsar@gmail.com) <sup>2)</sup>

[desbronaris@gmail.com](mailto:desbronaris@gmail.com) <sup>3)</sup>

### ABSTRACT

In this study, the researcher analyzes taboo language phenomenon in a comic entitled *My ID Is Gangnam Beauty* especially on the kinds of taboo language used uttered by the characters with good academic background. The objectives of this research are to identify and describe the types of taboo language uttered by the characters of Maenggi Ki's *My ID Is Gangnam Beauty*, to find out the most dominant types of taboo language of taboo language uttered by the characters in Maenggi Ki's *My ID Is Gangnam Beauty* and to find out the reasons for the most dominant type of taboo language uttered by the characters in Maenggi Ki's *My ID Is Gangnam Beauty*. The researcher uses a descriptive qualitative method based on Batistella (2005) theory and Wardhaugh (2006) theory. The technique of analyzing data are: classifying, analyzing, discussing and reporting. Based on the result on the analysis, there are four types of taboo language that found in *My ID Is Gangnam Beauty*: Ephemeral, Obscenity, Profanity, and Vulgarity. The most dominant type is Ephemeral type which are found one hundred six (106) times out of 84 episodes. There are 4 the functions that can be reasons of most dominant taboo language is occur that found in *My ID Is Gangnam Beauty*: To Draw Attention to Oneself, To Show Contempt, To be Provoke, To Mock Authority out of 84 episodes.

***Key Words: Taboo Language, Comics, My ID Is Gangnam Beauty***

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Communication is a human way of conveying information and ideas that can be understood by others. Communication helps every individual on earth get to know each other better through social interaction. As a means of communication, language has a big role and language plays a great part in our life. Chaika ( in Anggita 2015: 2) also states

that language is a human way to reveal or cover up their identity, character, and background, even though they are not aware that they have actually done so. It is the reason, a person determines for himself the type of language to be used in speaking and showing his identity. Some people make language as a way to express their emotions

or feelings like when they are sad or angry. One of the ways to express their feeling is with producing taboo language. Someone will use taboo language to curse because that is the best way to express themselves. The example of this case can be seen in Batak societies of Indonesia. In Batak's culture, it is forbidden for a someone to issue the word "Jojang" where the word means, besides that when a family holds a traditional Batak event, they are required to use a scabbard. If someone does not obey the rules that have been set, then he will get a punishment or a bad view from the existing community. In every region, culture or society there are things that are considered inappropriate to be done or said which are usually known as taboo actions and taboo words. These two things are related to each other, because some taboo acts match the taboo words while others do not (Fairman, 2009: 27).

Nowadays people can accept the use of taboo words because it is considered as the best way to deliver their strongest feeling. Some people argue that taboo language is only often spoken or spoken by lower educational background since it is believed that educational background affects the way people speak. On the other hand, the assumption is somehow not true because people with good educational background on

several occasions still uses obscene and offensive language in their conversation. Sometimes they say taboo language for a specific purpose such as attracting other people's attention or to show their great desire to express their feelings.

Based on these thoughts, the researcher decided to analyze taboo language phenomenon in a comic especially on the kinds of taboo language used and the functions of taboo language uttered by the characters in the comic. In conducting the research, the researcher chooses a comic as the source of data rather than conducting a kind of field study. Moreover, since comic are images that are made to entertain and can give moral messages to readers, usually based on a picture of people's lives at that time. Comics can be published on several devices, such as websites, books, or applications that can be downloaded on the mobile playstore. Researcher use the WEBTOON application because it is in demand by many people.

#### **A. Taboo Language**

Akmajian et al., (2004: 303) defines taboo words are the words that are forbidden to pronounce completely or at least not used in different situations or formal situations. It means, everyone who comes from a different culture and comes with different

values is prohibited from uttering a language that shocks individuals and groups of people in polite meetings or conversations in order to avoid misunderstandings that can be fatal for themselves.

In general, people refer to taboo language as harsh words that should not be used in everyday conversation because they can have a surprising effect on people who do not. Linguists such as Diez (via Fakuade, 2013: 119) also support the idea that some people categorize taboo words as words that have a bad meaning because they contain cruel and inappropriate substances that should be avoided. In different societies, it may be difficult for a person to understand taboo words if the words do not belong to a particular society that has the same value.

This linguistics researchers say that taboo words should be avoided because there is abusive and vulgar language. However, words that are considered taboo are like sacred functions if they are spoken outside the context of sacred ceremonies. For example, in a religious context such as at church or when discussing religion, words such as Jesus Christ or cursed by God are appropriate. Although they may become taboo, when spoken out of formal circumstances used to shock, offend or

criticize others like Jesus Christ! You are so stupid.

## **B. Types of Taboo Language**

Batistella (2005: 72) prompts four types of taboo words, they are: epithets, profanity, vulgarity, and obscenity. 1)

### **Epithets**

Epithets are recognized by several types of slurs, such as bitches and phages. Race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, appearance, and disabilities like niggers, midgets and retards, bastards, tit-mans are also related to other references (Batistella, 2005: 72). Jay (in Doyle 2006: 2-3) defines Epithets is defined as a short word but has the power of explosive language of passion caused by frustration or anger like an asshole.

### **2) Profanity**

Based on Batistella (2005: 72), profanity can be categorized as religious cursing because it usually includes the foul-mouthed use of what is considered to be sacred. Being more detail, Jay in Doyle (2006: 2-3) explained profanity as the expression involving the use of religious terms in a profane, secular or uncaring manner. The words that belong to this type are Jesus Christ, hell, damn, goddamn.

### **3) Vulgarity**

Vulgarity and obscenity have the same reference especially to words or expressions that contain sexual life system and excretory function in an unpleasant way (Batistella, 2005: 72). Jay (in Mercury, 1995: 30) states that vulgarity is used to humiliate or bring down the thing or individual referred to or described. The words that belong to this type are such as ass, tit, cuck, duck, and cunt. 4)

#### Obscenity

Obscenity refers to expressions that are prohibited from public use since they involve repulsion to the sense, abhorrent, impolite and detestable to morality (Jay, in Doyle, 2009: 1). Moreover, based on Batistella (2005: 72) profanity is described as words or expression which involve sex differentiating anatomy or sexual and excretory function that usually uttered in rough manner. The words that belong to this kind are fuck and shit.

#### C. Functions of Taboo Language

Taboo words are usually uttered because there is a reason behind them. Wardhaugh (2006: 239), asserts that taboo words are disregarded in particular occasion because they have several functions such as to draw attention to oneself, to show contempt, to be provocative, and to mock authority.

#### D. Taboo Words in Asian Society

Asian people are people who have more norms than others, as well as taboos. If Trudgill observes that taboo words are particularly severe in Western society particularly with regard to sex, excretion, and Christianity. (Trudgill, 2000: 19). Taboo in Asian society in general is also no different from western society, such as death, sex, and bodily functions are also major taboos. (Yang 2006: 88). Every country in Asia also has special taboos, such as being prohibited from wearing shoes in the house, mentioning the name of God or gods in vain. Common examples of this category are expressions like damn! and Oh My Gosh!.

#### E. Webtoon

Webtoons are a fantastic form of someone imagination through cartoons or pictures. The beauty of it is that it's continuously evolving. The list of genres keeps expanding. And new features such as cinematics and physical effects (phone vibration) are being introduced to enhance the reading experience. Webtoons will always thrive, provided that we have smartphones and the internet

**2. METHOD**

The researcher used the design of the descriptive qualitative method because this research is not focused on numbers but tends to focus on the phenomenon of words, phrases, and sentences. Descriptive qualitative is not reducible to numbers and categories but in a situation of a person’s life and the participant’s words to understand social interaction. The taboo language of the collected data is identified and categorized, and the following are some steps for data collection, namely:

1. Downloading WEBTOON application on Playstore.
2. Choosing the comic on WEBTOON: *My Id Is Gangnam Beauty*
3. Reading the *My Id Is Gangnam Beauty* comic
4. Choosing the words that the researcher need.
5. Classifying the types and reasons based on Batistella theory and Wardhaugh theory.

**3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**A. Types of Taboo Language**

Analysis of the types of taboo language in *My Id Is Gangnam Beauty* comic. The researcher classifies 4 types of taboo language, namely: Ephetets Type, Profanity Type, Obscenity Type, and Vulgarity Type. Based on the researcher's analysis, this have words in the form of taboo language. The

words used in *My Id Is Gangnam Beauty* are presented in the following table.

**Note:**

**Ep:** Ephetets

**Ob:** Obscenity

**Pr:** Profanity

**Vu:** Vulgarity

**Table 4. 2**

**Frequency of Language in *Gangnam***

Taboo words	Types of Taboo Language				Number of Occurrence
	Ep	Pr	Ob	Vu	
Ugly	□				22

**Taboo *My Id Is Beaut***

y

Bastard	<input type="checkbox"/>				25
Dumb/fool/idiot/blunt	<input type="checkbox"/>				20
That son of bitch	<input type="checkbox"/>				1
Bitch	<input type="checkbox"/>				16
Motherfucker	<input type="checkbox"/>				1
Fuck			<input type="checkbox"/>		30
Ass				<input type="checkbox"/>	6
Asshole				<input type="checkbox"/>	4
Jackass				<input type="checkbox"/>	2
Jerk	<input type="checkbox"/>				9
Shit			<input type="checkbox"/>		4
Plastic/plastic monster	<input type="checkbox"/>				12
Scumbag				<input type="checkbox"/>	2
Damn		<input type="checkbox"/>			3
Hell		<input type="checkbox"/>			2
Oh my gosh/gosh/gawd		<input type="checkbox"/>			4
Suck			<input type="checkbox"/>		3
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>166</b>

### 1. Ephetets

In *My Id Is Gangnam Beauty*, which characterizes the use of sexuality, mental and disabilities. Examples of Ephetets type:

Dumb/fool/idiot

Kyung Seok: “Are you **dumb**?” (*My Id Is Gangnam Beauty*, 2021, Episode. 3)

In the example above, Kyung Seok is calling Mi Rae with **Dumb** which is

categorized as epithet because the word

**Dumb/fool** which refers to insult Mi Rae

because Mi Rae does not realize that Suah always pretends to be a good person in front of her. **Dumb** means a person who is very blunt, unintelligent and lacking in understanding something, be it words, behavior or knowledge. This word is suitable to insult people who can not think

so that it is used and directed to female and male.

## 2. Profanity

In *My Id Is Gangnam Beauty*, profanity words used are damn, hell, and oh my gosh/gawd.

Damn

Ji Hyo: “Wow, so **damn** fast! Hahahahaha..Do I sense the first couple on campus?!” (*My Id Is Gangnam Beauty*, 2021, Episode 13)

In the quote above one same class with Mi Rae and Kyung Seok use the word **Damn** to express his shocked with the gossip about Mi Rae and Kyung Seok. **Damn** is used to say of people who considered cursed by God. The word is usually prohibited outside of religious activities. The word **Damn** is aimed at women and men.

## 3. Obscenity

In *My Id Is Gangnam Beauty* there are three obscenity, such as fuck, shit, and suck. One of example

Fuck

Chanwu Kim: “ What? **Fuck**...Are you siding with him right now?” (*My Id Is Gangnam Beauty*, 2021, Episode 5)

The example above is includes in obscenity words, because Chanwu Kim said the word **Fuck**. The word **Fuck** means an

obscene word that is often used by western society to refer to the act of sexual intercourse and is also commonly used as a reinforcement to convey disdain. **Fuck** is usually directed at both men and women.

## 4. Vulgarity

There are four vulgarity that found in *My Id Is Gangnam Beauty*: Ass, Jackass, scumbag, Asshole. An example of vulgarity.

Ass

Chanwu Kim: “ Did you really think that you had a chance with me just because I was being nice to you? Date my **ass!!!** Looked yourself in the mirror!!!” (*My Id Is Gangnam Beauty*, 2021, Episode 14 )

The dialogue above includes vulgarity because it contains the word **Ass**. The word **Ass** means the body part of the tail or commonly referred to as the buttocks. **Ass** is a very inappropriate word to say because it is considered rude and cursing others. This word is usually addressed to both men and women.

## B. The Most Dominant Types and Functions of Taboo Language

From the several types of taboo language above, it can be described as follows:

**Table 4. 3**

**Frequency of Repetition of Types of Taboo Language**

No	Types of Taboo Language	Total Repetition Words	Percentage
1	Ephitets	106	63, 86%
2	Profanity	9	5, 42%,
3	Obscenity	37	22, 28%
4	Vulgarity	14	8, 43%.
Total		166	100%

Based on the table above, The highest frequency of the types of taboo language is ephitets. Ephitets appears 106 times out of 166 total data (63, 86%). The lowest frequency is obtained by profanity with 9 out of 166 data (5, 42%,). Ephitets becomes the most frequently used taboo words because it is considered as the most effective way to insult someone.

### **C. Reasons for the Most Dominant Type of Taboo Language**

#### **1. To Draw Attention to Oneself**

This function can exist when someone says a taboo word which has a strong connotation to attract the attention of listeners. Here are examples to grab attention self.

Chanwu Kim: “ You **motherfuckers!!!** Do you all think this is a joke?!”(My Id Is Gangnam Beauty, 2021, Episode 11)

#### **2. To Show Contempt**

This function is the kind that is said when someone tries to show contempt by using taboo words, he or she will insult the other person by saying words that can offend the pride. Conversation below is the example of this function.

Chanwu Kim: “ Are you going to play dumb with me, you **bastard**? Did you not understand when I told you that it was a mistake?” (My Id Is Gangnam Beauty, 2021, Episode 6)

#### **3. To be Provocative**

Someone who saying taboo language will have the intention to provoke a certain response such as a violation or desire from another person. Verbal taboo words can be the most efficient process offered to protesters offering to make a reaction fall apart. Taboo languages are considered

successful if the response is in line with the speaker's expectations.

Chanwu Kim: “You obviously said something that made Suah change her mind!!! Don’t play with me, you **bitch!!!**”(My Id Is Gangnam Beauty, 2021, Episode 6)

#### 4. To Mock Authority

People sometimes use taboo language when they are not satisfied with the public image such as government, local government and institutions. Using taboo words because they want to convey disappointment with facts that are different from what is expected. In the comic *My Id Is Gangnam Beauty* is available for this function.

Chanwu: “Gangnam station is full of **bitches** like you...! How dare you get in the way of me and Suah”

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

There are 4 types of taboo language in *My ID Is Gangnam Beauty*. They are: Euphemism, Obscenity, Profanity, and Vulgarity. The euphemism is found one hundred six times (106) or 63, 86%, obscenity which found thirty seven times (37) or 22, 28%, and profanity which found nine times (9) or 5, 42%, and vulgarity which found fourteen times (14) or 8, 43%.

The most dominant types of taboo language is euphemism type, which are found one hundred six (106) times in eighty four (84) episodes. The reasons of using taboo language in *My Id Is Gangnam Beauty* are to show contempt, to draw attention to oneself, to be provocative, and to mock authority.

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