

THE ANALYSIS OF TABOO WORDS IN EUPHORIA SEASON 1 EPISODE: SHOOK ONES PT. II

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Abstract:

In expressing emotive feelings, people tend to use bad language by uttering taboo words. Although taboo words are considered offensive and are prohibited in society, taboo words are still uttered by some people and are not even censored in movies. This research aims to identify the types of taboo words and to identify the function of taboo words uttered in Euphoria Season 1 Episode: Shook Ones Pt. II. The data of this research are in the form of sentence or dialogue containing taboo words which are found in the transcript of the series. This research applied descriptive qualitative method. The data were classified based on Battistella's theory of types of taboo words and Wardhaugh's theory of functions of taboo words. The result of the research shows that there are 107 taboo words found in 78 dialogues in this episode. There are four types of taboo uttered by the characters in the episode, namely obscenity, profanity, vulgarity and epithets. Based on the data analysis, obscenity becomes the most frequently uttered, and vulgarity as well as epithets become the rarely uttered with the same frequency. In analyzing the functions of taboo words, all of the four functions of taboo words are found in the result of the research, namely to draw attention, to show contempt, to be aggressive or provocative, and to mock authority. The most frequently used is the function to draw attention, and the least one is the function to mock authority.

Keywords:

Taboo words, types of taboo, functions of taboo



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INTRODUCTION

People use language to interact, to communicate and to express feelings. In expressing feelings such as anger, surprise and disappointment, people tend to use bad language by uttering taboo words which are considered as forbidden words in society. Trudgill (2000) proposed that, "taboo can be characterized as being concerned with behavior which is believed to be supernaturally forbidden, or regarded as immoral or improper; it deals with behavior which is prohibited or inhibited in an apparently irrational manner" (p.18). Furthermore, people tend to avoid the use of taboo words, because "it can cause discomfort, harm or injury to others" (Allan & Burridige, 2006, p.9).

Nowadays, the phenomenon of uncensored taboo utterances in movies is very common, especially those that focus on the lives of young adults. Euphoria is a TV series about a group of high school teenagers who deal with issue of drugs, sex, identity, trauma, social media, love and friendship in today's increasingly unstable world. The first season of this series focuses on the relationship between two young girls trying to find their place in the world: recovering addict, Rue, and new-in-town, Jules. This series was released on June 2019 under the HBO production. The episode Shook Ones Pt II is one of the top-rated episode among the 8 episodes in total, which got rate up to 9.1 in IMDb official website. Furthermore, this episode takes place during the Carnival and involves almost all of the main characters facing complicated situations.

Despite the fact that taboo words are avoided and prohibited in society, taboo words are not even censored and are used in daily conversation in the Euphoria TV series. In this case, the researcher is interested in analyzing taboo utterances in Euphoria Season 1 because the characters utter taboo words in daily conversation which can be analyzed easily. Therefore, the objectives of this research are limited to identify the types of taboo words and to identify the functions of taboo words uttered in Euphoria Season 1 Episode: Shook Ones Pt. II.

Taboo subjects can vary widely, including sex, bodily function, religious issues, and politics. Moreover, Battistella (2005) classified taboo words into four types, namely epithets, profanity, vulgarity, and obscenity (p.72). He proposed that epithets are used to describe a person or thing which not only refer to race, ethnicity, gender, or sexuality such as *wop*, *raghead*, *bitch*, or *fag*, but also refer to appearance and disabilities such as *midget*, *gimp* and *retard*. The next type is profanity, it is defined as religious cursing in which ranges from a mild *hell* or *damn*, to a more emphatic *goddamn*, and it includes the coarse use of what is considered sacred. Moreover, Battistella argued that vulgarity and obscenity are terms for characterizing sex-differentiating anatomy or sexual and excretory function in coarse way. The distinction between the two terms is being a matter of degree and prurience. However, Jay (1992) added that vulgarity refers to the raw expression of street language such as *ass*, *tit*, *cock*, *dick*, and *cunt*. Jay also pointed out that obscenity is considered as the most offensive and supposed to be rarely used in public such as *shit* and *fuck* (as cited in Anggita, 2015, p.22).

Although taboo words are forbidden to be uttered in society because people tend to find it offensive, some people still uttered taboo words to express emotive feelings on particular occasions. Therefore, Wardhaugh (2006) proposed that taboo words are uttered for certain functions including to draw attention, or to show contempt, or to be aggressive or provocative, or to mock authority (p.239). In addition, Anggita (2015) elaborated the definitions of each functions in her research as follows. The function to draw attention means that people uttered taboo words which are believed as a strong and powerful language has power in drawing instant reaction. Moreover, taboo words are used to show contempt which means they are uttered when someone wants to show their disrespect by insulting the listener's pride. The function to be aggressive or provocative refers to the intention of people in uttering taboo words to express anger and also to provoke a specific response such as violation or anger from the listener. The last function is to mock authority which can occur when people utter taboo words to show their dissatisfaction, disbelief or hatred with public images such as government and institutions.

METHOD

This research used descriptive qualitative method. Bodgan and Biklen (2007) pointed out that the data analyzed in qualitative research take the form of words or picture rather than number. Moreover, the data analyzed were presented descriptively. The source of the data of this research are the transcript of Euphoria Season 1 Episode: Shook Ones Pt. II. The transcript was retrieved from unauthorized website, *8flix.com*. The first season of this series was released in June 2019 and directed by Sam Levinson. The data of this research focused on the dialogues containing taboo words uttered by the characters in the series.

In conducting this research, the researcher did several steps for collecting and analyzing the data. The first step is watching Euphoria Season 1: Shook Ones Pt. II. The next step is downloading the transcript of the dialogue from an unauthorized website, as well as analyzing the accuracy of the transcript. The technique of collecting data also covers steps of marking, categorizing and arranging the dialogue containing taboo words uttered by the characters. Furthermore, the collected data were identified and classified based on Battistella's theory of types of taboo words as well as Wardhaugh's theory of functions of taboo words. After analyzing and presenting the data descriptively, the last step is drawing conclusion from the research findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Types and Functions of Taboo Words

There are 107 taboo words found in 78 dialogues in in this episode. The collected data were classified based on Battistella's theory of types of taboo words and Wardhaugh's theory of functions of taboo words. There are four types of taboo words uttered by the characters in the episode, namely obscenity, vulgarity, profanity, and epithets. Furthermore, there are four functions of taboo words used in the episode including to draw attention, to show contempt, to be aggressive or provocative, and to mock authority. The frequency of types and functions of taboo words are elaborated in the following table.

Table 1 Types of Taboo Words in Euphoria Season 1 Episode: Shook Ones Pt. II

NO	Types of Taboo Words	Frequency	Percentage
1	Obscenity	81	75%
2	Vulgarity	6	6%
3	Profanity	14	13%
4	Epithets	6	6%
	Total	107	100%

The table shows that obscenity is the most frequently uttered 81 times (75%), followed by profanity which uttered 14 times (13%). Furthermore, epithets and vulgarity are rarely uttered with the same amount of 6 times (6%) for each.

Obscenity

Data 1

00:08:50,923 --> 00:08:53,551

Rue : *It's not like her body ever really belonged to her in the first place. But **fuck** it. She'd save it for the memoirs.*

The taboo word “fuck” literally means an act of having sex with somebody. It is classified as obscenity because it refers to sexual activities. Furthermore, Rue uttered the taboo word to show ignorance about Jules’ past story.

Vulgarity

Data 2

00:02:41,971 --> 00:02:44,181

*Jesse : Suck my **dick**, you fucking cunt!*

In the dialogue above, Jesse who is a patient in a psychiatric hospital, uttered the taboo word “dick” to gain the attention of a doctor. However, the word “dick” refers to a man’s penis and is classified as vulgarity because it is related to raw expression of sex genital organ.

Profanity

Data 3

00:14:11,619 --> 00:14:16,499

Jules : Whoa! Whoa!

*Kat : We’re gonna die! Oh, my **God**.*

The taboo word “God” belongs to profanity because it is related to religious term, in which refers to a spirit that is worshiped and is believed to have created the universe (Oxford Learners Dictionaries). Kat uttered the taboo word to express her surprise when she and Jules were riding a ride at the Carnival.

Epithets

Data 4

00:28:22,595 --> 00:28:30,059

Cassie : I feel like this is a turning point.

Maddy : Totally.

Cassie : We should just pick the hottest, most confident, bad bitch version of ourselves, and be that for the rest of the school year.

The word “bitch” is a term for a female dog literally. However, “bitch” in the taboo form, refers to an unpleasant woman (Oxford Learners Dictionaries). Therefore, it can be concluded that “bitch” in the dialogue is classified as epithets because it is a taboo word used to describe a person. Cassie uttered the taboo word to describe Maddy and herself who wanted to turn out to be as bad as other people think about them.

Table 2 Functions of Taboo Words in Euphoria Season 1 Episode: Shook Ones Pt. II

NO	Functions of Taboo Words	Frequency	Percentage
1	To draw attention	63	59%
2	To show contempt	31	29%
3	To be aggressive or provocative	12	11%
4	To mock authority	1	1%
	Total	107	100%

The function to draw attention becomes the most frequently used with a total of 63 times (59%). The next functions are to show contempt which is used 31 times (29%), followed by the function to be aggressive or provocative which is used 12 times (11%). The least

used function is to mock authority, it is only used once with the percentage 1% in the episode.

To Draw Attention

Data 5

00:10:54,005 --> 00:11:00,720

Rue : *But sometimes I just sit and think...*

Ali : *Rue. Rue.*

Rue : *...like, what's the point?*

Ali : *Rue, I don't give a **shit**. Why'd you call me?*

In the dialogue above, the taboo word “shit” is classified as a function to draw attention since Ali uttered it to gain attention Rue’s attention. Ali tried to call Rue several times, but Rue was still talking. Because of that, Ali uttered the taboo word to make Rue paid attention to him.

To Show Contempt

Data 6

00:30:24,091 --> 00:30:28,137

Nate : *You're fucking dead to me. **Fuck** you.*

The word “fuck” in the dialogue belongs to a function to show contempt, because it is used to show the disrespect by insulting Maddy. Nate was mad at how Maddy treated his mother before. Therefore, Nate expressed his hatred by insulting Maddy.

To be Aggressive and Provocative

Data 7

00:22:44,757 --> 00:22:46,924

Jules : *That's Nate's dad?*

Rue : *Yes, that's Nate's dad.*

Jules : *No **fucking** way!*

The taboo word “fucking” in the data above is classified as a function to be aggressive or provocative because Jules uttered it to express her anger which definitely also provoked Rue’s anger. In the previous scene, Jules and Rue were having an argument about who Cal Jacobs is. Therefore, Jules uttered a taboo word which made both of them angry at each other even more.

To Mock Authority

Data 8

00:03:32,772 --> 00:03:34,730

Rue : *And that's when Jules realized, this wasn't a tour at all. It was an elaborate plan to admit her to a **fucking** psychiatric hospital.*

The taboo word “fucking” in the dialogue is classified as a function to mock authority because it is uttered to show disrespect for a psychiatric hospital as a part of medical institution. Rue uttered the dialogue to describe Jules’ disbelief and hatred at being tricked by the doctors at the psychiatric hospital.

CONCLUSION

The objectives of this research are to identify the types of taboo words based on Battistella’s theory and to identify the functions of taboo words based on Wardhaugh’s

theory in *Euphoria Season 1 Episode: Shook Ones Pt. II*. Based on the research findings in result and discussion section, there are four types of taboo words uttered by the characters in this episode, namely obscenity, profanity, vulgarity, and epithets. The type of taboo word which becomes the most frequently uttered in this episode is obscenity because the characters found it was the most effective way to express emotive feelings. However, epithets and vulgarity are the least frequently uttered by the characters. Furthermore, the researcher found all of the four functions of taboo words used by the character in this episode, which are to draw attention, to show contempt, to be aggressive or provocative, and to mock authority. The function to draw attention becomes the most frequently used since the characters often used taboo words to distract someone and also to make people pay attention to their words. On the other hand, the least frequently used by the characters is the function to mock authority which only uttered once. That was because the genre of this series is a teen drama and does not focus on political issue.

Therefore, based on the result and discussion, it can be concluded that even though taboo words are prohibited and considered offensive in society, some people still utter taboo words and they can be found uncensored in some of the latest series and movies. However, this research is based on a teen drama series, some of the scenarios may have been dramatized or exaggerated.

This research is limited in analyzing the types and functions of taboo words uttered in *Euphoria Season 1 Episode: Shook Ones Pt. II*. There are other problems such as social status and gender differences in the use of taboo words that are not analyzed in this research. Therefore, other researcher can analyze taboo words using other expert theories or analyze differences in gender and social status in the same series.

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