

The Usage of Taboo in Sukabumi Society

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Introduction

Taboo is a social prohibition; it does not only relate to forbidden acts but also words (Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams, 2003). It means that when an act is considered to be taboo, then all related acts are also taboo including when they are talking about it.

Currently, technology is developing rapidly, and the development of technology results in the development of language, such as the emergence of some new words. Stockwell & Mintoka (2001) revealed that the sources of new words are from borrowing and word creation. Therefore, some people are more acquainted with new words than local ones. Such a condition could easily shift the local language. It is concluded that the development of technology is one of the causes of regional language shift. Moreover, the development of language could also transform the knowledge and belief system of a society. Qismullah & Yusuf (2014) in their research found that Acehnesse people have a change in habits, ideas, values, and behaviour caused by the development of education and communication technologies.

Referring to the development of technology and the shift of local language, there is a phenomenon about intergenerational language use of the Sundanese society in Sukabumi City. Sundanese society has a speech level called as *undak unduk bahasa* used by society when communicating among generations to show respect (Djajasudarma, 1994). However, Sundanese society in Sukabumi scarcely uses this speech level. They tend to use a mix of Indonesian and Sundanese. As a result, they use an improper language which is considered to be taboo. The problem of using taboo arises because they are not familiar with the certain terms of the local language, therefore they use the term that they usually hear without realizing that what they use is not worthy to utter or even taboo that could lead the hearers to feel uncomfortable. The taboo terms could actually be avoided to achieve the establishment of communication by means of refinement. Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams (2003) say that refinement is the replacement of words or phrase to avoid something unpleasant called a euphemism. The phenomenon of using taboo in Sukabumi does not only occur in the language use of adolescents, but also adults; that is why the politeness of using Sundanese language is decreasing. Based on the background, the researchers are interested in analyzing taboo speech used by the two generations. Therefore, the objectives of the research are; (1) to identify and describe the usage of taboo between the two generations, (2) to describe and formulate the kinds of taboo. The scope of the research includes speech of words, phrases and sentences which are commonly used by intergenerational Sundanese society in Sukabumi.

Methodology

The first framework was data collection which was done by deploying a questionnaire to respondents. In collecting data, the researchers apply an instrument called a discourse

completion test (DCT). Kasper & Dahl (1991) remarked that DCT is a questionnaire deployed to respondents with several questions in the form of incomplete dialogues. The DCT was applied because it is highly effective in the means of gathering a large amount of data quickly and creating an initial classification of semantic formulas and strategies that will occur in natural speech (Bebe & Cummings, 1985; Kasper & Dahl, 1991). However, in collecting the data of taboo speech, the researchers applied the DCT with modifications; the respondents were provided with a certain situation with three multiple choice answers and one essay. In the DCT, the researchers also attach a "cover letter" offered by Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2005) with the purpose to give information to respondents about the aim and the importance of the research, as well as the assurance to the respondents about the confidentiality of the given answers. In the research, the respondents are chosen based on age cohort; adolescent and adult. It is considered to be important because age is a variable that determines the politeness level in language use (Aminuddin, 2003). That is why language users will use certain codes when they communicate based on the situation and with whom they are talking to (Alagappan, Dealwis, & David, 2018). The number of respondents is 140 respondents. It refers to the theory of Mackey & Gass (2005) that *"one hundred participants are enough for descriptive studies, fifty participants for correlational studies, and from fifteen to thirty participants for experimental studies"* (p.124). Since there are 7 subdistricts in Sukabumi city, the researchers took 10 adolescent respondents and 10 adult respondents from each subdistrict. In the DCT there are 28 questions with several situations, and for each situation, there are 3 types of questions using multiple choices and 1 type of question using free answer, thus there are 3,920 data obtained from 140 respondents. The data are then grouped into two categories based on age cohort and kind of taboo. The next step is data validation for the purpose of finding out the depth of data validation (Sutopo, 2006). Meanwhile, in order to check the validity of the data, the researchers apply data triangulation. The obtained data are then compared with the informants to assure its truth. The informants are some experts of Sundanese language who live in Sukabumi city.

Results

From the analysis, it is found that adults use more taboo when communicating with adolescents. The following table shows the usage of taboo:

Table 1: The Usage of Taboo

Generation	Taboo		Euphemism		Subtotal	
	Number of Answers	Percentage	Number of Answers	Percentage	Number of Answers	Percentage
Adolescent	1.007	55%	883	45%	1960	100%
Adult	1.177	60%	783	40 %	1960	100%
Total					3920	100%

Meanwhile, the analysis of taboo usage of Sundanese speakers in Sukabumi results in 11 kinds of taboo, and most of the taboo used both by adolescents and adults are sexual organs and their activities. The following table shows the kinds of taboo usage and its percentage:

Table 2: Kinds of Taboo and Its Usage

Kinds of Taboo	Adolescents	Adult	Subtotal	Percentage
Bodies and their effluvia	120	135	255	11.6%
Organs and their effluvia as well as their acts	93	115	208	9.5%
Sexual organs and their activities	140	143	283	12.9%
Diseases and death	97	97	194	8.8%
Naming and viewing persons	81	90	171	7.8%
Swearing	97	94	191	8.6%
Privacy	101	108	209	9.5%
Underwear	118	131	249	11.3%
Food and Beverage	102	115	217	9.8%
Occupation	31	44	75	3.5%
Humiliating condition	63	83	146	6.7%
Total	1043	1155	2198	100%

Discussion

The number of the taboo used by adults, 60% (1,177 answers), can be seen from the answer of DCT that most of them chose the answer A and B. Both of the answers are words, phrases or sentences which are taboo to utter, particularly when communicating with adolescents. Meanwhile, the answers of C and D are the euphemism of the taboo. From the analysis, it shows that most of the respondents do not know that what they chose is a taboo utterance. It is because they never use Sundanese language in their daily conversation. Most of them are not introduced to Sundanese language by their parents. They communicate with Bahasa Indonesia with their parents since they were born. Therefore, Bahasa Indonesia is more dominant than Sundanese in their daily conversation. As a result, the politeness level in communication decreases. From the analysis, it is found that they are different kinds of taboo. Allan & Burrige (2006), in their book describe 5 kinds of taboo ; (1) bodies and their effluvia, (2) the organs and acts of sex, (3) diseases, death and killing, (4) naming, addressing, touching and viewing persons and sacred beings, objects and places, (5) food gathering, preparation and consumption. From the above perspective, it shows that the taboo mentioned are taboo related to acts. The theory is different from this research because the taboo usage in Sukabumi is verbal taboo. By applying the DCT methodology, it is effective to identify the taboo in Sukabumi Society that results in 11 kinds of taboo.

Conclusion

This research shows that the usage of taboo words in Sukabumi society is caused by the lack of using Sundanese language in their daily conversation. The usage of taboo words in Sukabumi society results in 11 kinds of taboo. In the analysis, the researchers only focus on the taboo related to speech, therefore the taboo obtained are verbal taboo. The method applied in collecting data is the discourse completion task (DCT) for it is an effective way to obtain speech data. From the research, it is concluded that taboo is mostly used by adult respondents. It is recommended that the people in Sukabumi city should use the Sundanese language in their daily conversation both in a formal and in an informal situation to establish politeness in conversation as well as to maintain the local language.

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