

An Analysis of Taboo on Netizen's Comments on the Cambodia SEA Games 2023's Instagram Account

Rosita Ambarwati ^{(1)*}, Sofie Rizky Mahirawati ⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾ Universitas PGRI Madiun, Madiun, Indonesia

* rosita@unipma.ac.id

Abstract

The Indonesian people are currently overjoyed of the upcoming 2023 SEA Games, which held in Cambodia. Instead of being proud and moved, netizens shouted insults in the comments section of the official SEA Games Cambodia Instagram account. The committee made a mistake during the opening ceremony of the SEA Games, causing widespread outrage and disappointment among Indonesian citizens. This study is a descriptive qualitative method with a sociolinguistics approach. The technique of collecting the data by using the documentation technique. The goal of this study is to discover the types and functions of taboo words in netizens' comments about the Cambodia_2023 Instagram account. The theories of Timothy Jay (1992) and Raymond D Liedlich (1973) are applied to analyze types and functions of taboo words. The result of the types of taboo are: (1) Epithets 41,8%, (2) Vulgarity 13,6%, (3) Cursing 7,6%, (4) Scatology 28,3%, and slang 8,7%. The functions are: (1) Discredit, (2) Creating, (3) Endearment, (4) Creating strong personal.

Keywords

Instagram, netizen comments, taboo words

Introduction

Social media as a means of communication is growing very rapidly. Mahdi & Bayu (2022) states that the number of active social media users in Indonesia reached 191 million people in January 2022. That number increased by 12.35% compared to the previous year. Social media is used as a medium for sharing, collaborating, and connecting, Puntodi (2011). This means that social media is a community where the members interact with each other to exchange information, convey ideas, feelings, and show existence. Unfortunately, communication on social media often becomes a source of new problems. Many cases that end in crime arise because of the use of language in communication. Perdana & Yusuf (2020) stated that several cases emerged in the potential use of language on social media violates the Information and Electronic Transaction Act (UU ITE). While (Rahman, 2019) that interacting on social media seem to no longer heed politeness. Therefore, people must be able to use good and polite language under the values and norms that apply in society.

Taboo, also spelled *taboo*, *Tongan taboo*, and *Maori tapu*, means the prohibition of acts based on the belief that such acts are too sacred and untouchable or too dangerous and cursed for the common. According to Wardhaugh (1986, p. 239) a taboo is the prohibition or avoidance of conduct in society that is considered harmful because it frightens, embarrasses, or shames its members, so being polite is a very strong compulsion. Society should avoid taboo utterances so that communication can run well. Taboo can vary widely, such as: sex; death; excretion; and bodily functions. religious issues. and politics. (Wardhaugh, 2006) further argues that taboos are ignored in certain cases because they draw attention to themselves, show contempt, show disorganized reactions, or have uncontrollable anger or ridicule, because it has multiple functions, such as expressing authority to act. Jay (1992) classifies 10 categories of taboo words, they are: Epithets, Profanity, Blasphemy, Obscenity, Cursing, Taboo, Vulgarity, Slang, Insult and Slur, and Scatology. The concept of taboo language is broad and various classification schemes have been proposed. Battistella and Jay (1992) both provide their own systems for classifying forbidden terms. In fact, the various forms of taboo language are always closely related and cannot be completely separated. When people abuse others, they usually also put them down. Meanwhile, the second theory by Liedlich (1973) explores the function of taboo words. Liedlich classifies six functions of taboo words such as create attention, discredit, provoke violent confrontation, endearment, create strong personal identification and provide catharsis.

Instagram is one of the social media that is growing very rapidly in Indonesia. Edisi.co states that Indonesia is in the top four in the category of the most Instagram users in the world with a total of 89.15 million users in online photo sharing service. The large number of Instagram users makes it interesting to analyze more deeply concerning taboos. Instagram allows users to apply different types of photo filters to their images in one click and share them with others. Despite Instagram being a fairly basic service, its simplicity has contributed to its popularity. Instagram's service is relatively straightforward. The focus is on posts containing images and short videos. These posts are included in the user's profile and can be made public on Instagram or privately

viewed by the user's followers. Posting mainly has his two channels. A user's persistent feed, or "stories", which are special areas where content is retained for 24 hours before it disappears (unless specifically archived). It is also possible to go "live" and stream video directly from the camera to the platform. This is the allure of Instagram so that users feel addicted to continuing to use Instagram, and also it is often the concern of fellow Instagram users to give comments, both positive and negative comments. Instagram comments are reactions that users can leave on uploaded images, videos, or Reels. Instagram comments are public, as opposed to direct messages (DMs), which go to a user's inbox and can only be viewed. This means that the comments posted on a post are visible to anyone. It is very important not to speak taboo on social media.

Taboo as a variation of language use in society is very interesting to study. This can be seen from several previous studies, namely; (1) Rahman (2019) who studied the use of taboo on social media through forensic linguistic analysis, (2) Rahmatulloh (2021) examines taboo which focuses on swearing to release emotions between relief and guilt, (3) Al Farobi et al (2022) researched the taboo expression in Javanese Ngapak banyumasan, (4) (Putra et al., 2023) who also researches taboo on social media through forensic linguistics. Sutisna et al (2022) provide the results of an analysis of gender taboos on social media, especially how women receive Danilla Riyadi's YouTube posts.

Based on the background of the problem and the results of previous research, this study tries to explore the phenomenon of language taboos that appear in Instagram user comments, especially comments in viral posts. The object of this study is an event that is still new and is currently hotly discussed, thus arousing researchers' interest in discussing it. This is a new topic in the study of taboo expressions. This study also tries to dig deeper into how taboo utterances are made by Indonesian people who are known for having a polite culture. One of the viral posts is the event when Southeast Asian countries have recently celebrated the SEA Games, which were held in Cambodia. All Southeast Asian states participate in energizing Southeast Asia's largest sports party. However, a problem arose at the anticipated moment, namely the opening ceremony of the SEA Games, causing great disappointment, particularly among Indonesians. Taboo language can be classified as a form of swearing when the intended character feels materially and morally disadvantaged (Rahman, 2019). Some of harsh comments from Indonesian netizens were found in the comments section on the official Cambodia SEA Games account, expressing anger over the incompetence committed at the Southeast Asian Games opening ceremony. This analysis follows Timothy Jay's theory (1992) about types of taboo words, and Liedlich (1973) about the function of taboo.

Method

Data were analyzed using qualitative methods, and sociolinguistics approach. The Primary data is in the form of captions or sentences on the Cambodia SEA Games official Instagram account. The amount of data used is 184 comments. The data were collected using documentation techniques. Documentation method is a data collection technique by studying the data that has been documented, namely screenshots of the comments in the Cambodia Sea Games account. After the data is obtained, the data is analyzed using "the Flow Model" by Miles et al (2013). It can be divided into four activities, namely

data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and concluding/verification. The details of the process carried out by researchers are: Firstly, the researcher opened the Cambodia SEA Games official Instagram account. Secondly, the researcher read the captions one by one in each post. Then, the researcher took screenshots and collected data for analysis. Data were analyzed by categorizing based on ten types of taboo words according to Jay (1992), and Liedlich (1973) to dig the function of taboo.

Results

The results of the analysis of netizen comments on Cambodian Instagram obtained the following results.

Epithets

Epithets are short emotional expressions driven by speakers to describe anger and disappointment. The following data shows the word taboo which is an epithet.

Data 1

@zaskia32087

"KURSI KONDANGAN, LAMPU MOBIL, SENTER, BENDERA TERBALIK KOCAK GEMINK NII PANITIA 🤔👉👉👉👉👉"

"Plastic chair, car headlight, flashlight, upside down flag, the committee are hilarious (but dumb) 🤔👉👉👉👉👉".

Based on the above data written by the account @zaskia32087, the typing is delivered using capital letters which means language that is very emotional and tends to demean the facilities used at the SEA Games in Cambodia such as the seats provided that are not suitable for use, the lights used use flashlights, installation of the (Indonesian) flag that is not appropriate and at the end of the sentence demeans the performance of the committee in charge with indirect sentences saying they are stupid and the "vomit" emoticon. This data falls into one of the taboo categories, namely epithet. This comment also relates to the function of taboo, which is endearment, it seems the word that used is to provoke a certain response. This comment deliberately pointed out things that others may not have noticed, such as the use of plastic chairs, instead of using better quality chairs. And the use of spotlights that are less pleasing to the audience, it can be seen that the account owner is provoking the sea games committee.

Vulgarity

Vulgarity is a word related to expressions that show gross anatomical and sexual excretory functions. The expression below indicates vulgarity.

Data 2

@azamksrrdtya

"Cokkk Kont*I "

"Fuckkk Dick" (to Cambodia).

Based on the first data written by account @azamksrrdtya, the use of the word "Kont* (dick) is one part of the male body which is included in the taboo category, namely vulgarity. Submission of one of these netizen comments refers to the Cambodian state which is not thorough and irresponsible for the problems that arise. This comment relates to create strong personal identification. The speaker uttered the taboo word because he was dissatisfied and very disappointed with Cambodia for the organization of this year's SEA Games.

Data 3

@arii_gintingg

"Cambodia memek"

"Cambodia vagina"

Based on the second data written by account @arii_gintingg, one of the taboo comments made by writing the word "*memek*" which intends to bring down the country of Cambodia and swear by writing the use of sentences of one part of the female body, namely the vagina. So, the throwing of this hateful word is included in one of the taboo characteristics, namely vulgarity. This comment relates to Creating strong personal identification. The person felt disappointed with Cambodia for not being able to host the SEA Games. The comparison with one of the female vital organs is a form of dissatisfaction and portrays Cambodia as a disgusting country. The word *memek*, which means a woman's vital organ that should be guarded and not said openly, looks impolite. In addition, speakers liken Cambodia to female genitalia. This is a slap in the face and humiliates the country.

Cursing

Jay (1992:2) defines the intent of cursing as to hurt on other person verbally using certain words or phrases and also used as an expression, whether it is excited, shocked, or anger. The data below shows the cursing.

Data 4

@raizel_xenovia496

"Untuk pemerintah Kamboja, saya sarankan agar Anda memeriksakan mata agar dapat melihat dengan jelas perbedaan antara bendera Indonesia dan bendera Polandia"

"For the Cambodian government, I suggest you get your eyes checked so you can clearly see the difference between the Indonesian flag and the Polish flag".

Based on data written by account @raizel_xenovia496, the word taboo that was conveyed meant that the Cambodian government was "blind", so the author suggested to the Cambodian government that one day they go to an ophthalmologist to have the Cambodian government's "eyes" checked. The wording of the comment is mean-spirited and condemning, as Cambodian officials are not observant of the mistakes that occur. This comment aims to create Strong Personal Identification. Its purpose is to provoke a certain response.

Data 5

@indoikan.id

"Jancok ancen kembang kuburan (Jancok bunga kuburan), kudu di proses hukum iki (Harus di proses hukum ini), lambang negara adalah kehormata, hilangkan akun ini #bannedcambodia"

"Fuck the funeral flower country, (this mistake) must be prosecuted, the state symbol is honor, eliminate this account #bannedcambodia"

Based on data 5 written by the account @indoikan.id, wrote a sarcastic sentence by directly ridiculing Cambodia as a "grave flower" where in Indonesia there are flowers named Cambodia which grow a lot in graveyards and the author wants to remove the official SEA Games Instagram account by followed by the hashtag #bannedcambodia. This comment relates to endearment, the function of taboo words to provoke a certain response such anger.

Slang

Slang is a word or vocabulary that is developed in certain sub-groups. Slang word becomes taboo because the term is only understood by certain groups while the interlocutor as the object of conversation does not know that the meaning of the word is something that is inappropriate to convey.

Data 6

@_fikiveb

"Sengaja dibalik ya, negara kembang kuburan."

"Deliberately reversed (Indonesian flag), country of funeral flowers".

Based on data 6 written by account @_fikiveb, one type of taboo word that appears is the use of the word "country of grave flowers". This nickname or slang word is only known by Indonesian netizens because frangipani flowers usually grow in cemetery yards in Indonesian territory. The taboo word is shown in the name of Cambodia, which in the end is familiar to netizens when mentioning "Cambodia" is replaced with "*Kamboja*". It means that the word Cambodia is spoofed to become *kamboja* which means a type of flower that has an inappropriate connotation, namely a grave. This comment relates with Discredit, function of taboo words to show their disrespect toward the Cambodia.

Data 7

@artaosicky

"Cambodong"

"Cambodog [equates Cambodia with dogs]"

Based on data 7 written by account @artaosicky, one of the types of taboo slang words conveyed, namely "Cambodog", equates Cambodia with dogs. This slang word also emerged from Indonesian netizens because of their anger towards the Cambodian state for the incident that occurred. Using animal depictions of dogs, in Indonesia in particular,

means bad. This comment relates with Discredit, function of taboo words to show their disrespect felling toward the Cambodia.

Scatology

Scatological terms refer to human waste products or processes.

Data 8

@nobuhiro_watsuki

"💩💩💩💩💩💩💩💩💩💩💩💩"

Based on data 8 written by the account @nobuhiro_watsuki, the word taboo is conveyed only with the poop emoji. The meaning of these comments was as a form of anger towards the ongoing SEA Games event, one of the biggest triggers was during the opening ceremony. As a form of annoyance with the committee, even Cambodia itself as the host of the SEA Games. This comment relates with Creating attention, function of taboo word. Spam comments using lots of poop emojis are one way to get other readers' attention.

Data 9

@yuliprasetyodiningrat

"💩💩💩💩💩🇰🇲💩💩💩💩💩💩"

Based on data 9 written by account @yuliprasetyodiningrat, one type of Scatology in the word taboo here is more specifically aimed at this sarcasm. By using the poop emoji, which is a type of expression of annoyance, then placing the Cambodian flag between the poop emojis. The comment shows that the country of Cambodia as the host of the 2023 SEA Games failed to bring good expectations to the fans of the 2023 SEA Games. This comment relates to Creating attention, function of taboo word. The use of many poop emojis and then putting a Cambodian flag in the center of the poop emoji is also a form of seeking reader attention. The overall results of data analysis can be depicted as the following diagram.

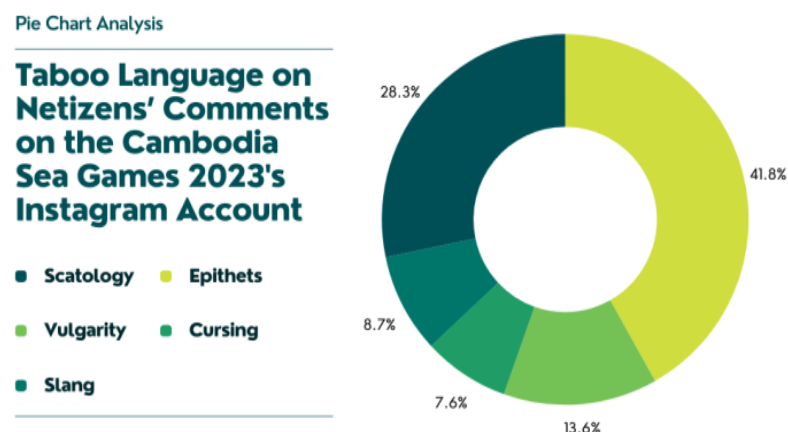


Figure 1. The Result of Taboo Types

Discussion

The language taboo that appears in comments on the Cambodia Sea Games Instagram account is an expression of Indonesian citizens' annoyance because of the committee's mistake in flying the Indonesian national flag upside down. This is a very humane reaction, and it is a manifestation of the love and belonging of the Indonesian people to their country. The national identity is a part of the manifestation of feelings of love for the motherland and can be realized by; (1) maintaining the good name of the nation; (2) spirit and personality; (3) proud of having a homeland with a variety of ethnic cultures; (4) not committing acts and actions that are detrimental to the nation and (5) loyal and obedient to the rules and norms applied (Savitri et al., 2020).

The feeling of love for one's country or patriotism in the global era has changed. Progress technology has removed boundaries certain spatial and temporal areas in a region. This illustrates that defending your homeland can be done using any media, one of which is social media (Tridiatno & Suryanti, 2021; Yurbani, 2021; Suheri et al., 2022; Dewi & Listiana, 2021). The state rule to respect and be proud of the country's flag has been firmly ingrained in the hearts of Indonesian citizens so that they express their expressions using language taboos.

The feelings of anger felt by netizens ultimately trigger stress and affect the individual's mental health condition in the emotional aspect. One way to release these emotional blocks is by writing the feelings through comments (Oktavilia & Marahayu, 2023; Suban et al., 2023). The behavior expressed by netizens verbally in the form of taboo can be categorized as aggressiveness (Sitanggang et al., 2023; Abdullah et al., 2021; Sulubere et al., 2023; Istiqomah, 2017; Eliani et al., 2018; Fajar, 2020). Myers in Afriany et al (2019) states that verbal aggression is aggressive behavior because of hatred or because of emotions (hostile aggression). expression of anger or characterized by high emotionality, solely carried out by hurting others, as an expression of anger.

From the perspective of psychology, the phenomenon of taboo expressions in Instagram posts is also influenced by the background of netizens who are in their middle and late adolescence. Sarwono in Rachmania (2010) describes the characteristics of teenagers in the middle and final phases who tend to look for opportunities to unite with other people/they like friends who have the same characteristics as themselves. When netizens read the comments on a post, they tend to be moved to do the same thing (Handayani, 2018).

The technology that develops in social media not only allows users to express emotions, but users can also respond by giving likes to posts that appear on the home page or through notifications (Steinert & Dennis, 2022). This is one of the factors that influences Instagram users to express anger. It must be acknowledged that social media has an impact on socio-cultural change. Samovar in Anwar (2017) explains that social media can change attitudes. One of them is the erosion of polite language culture. Social media users can express insults and anger because they feel braver to comment (Rahman, 2019). The undirect face-to-face communication pattern means users can freely comment. On the other hand, this phenomena also indicates that taboo can be a strong

booster for high self-esteem. Self-esteem is considered capable of realizing human psychological well-being (Arroisi & Badi', 2022). On the other hand, taboo can also be an instrument to release emotions that become pressure in the individual (Rahmatulloh, 2021).

Conclusion

The authors can provide conclusions based on the data that has been found regarding taboo comments written by Indonesian netizens containing elements of disappointment and anger with sentences that are sarcastic. The use of the word taboo written by Indonesian netizens is directed at several photo posts on the official SEA Games 2023 Instagram account. There are swear words Animal, body of human, and harsh terms. The authors found some data related to Jay's taboo theory there are: 1 Epithets data, 2 Obscenity data, 2 Cursing data, 2 Slang data, and 2 Scatology data. It can be concluded that all Indonesian netizens feel disappointed and angry about Cambodia's negligence at the 2023 SEA Games, especially towards the committee that takes care of the readiness for the biggest sports week event in Southeast Asia and then found a lot of data in the form of comments related to the taboo theory.

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